

# SAINT PAULS.

JULY, 1668.

## THE SACRISTAN'S HOUSEHOLD.

A STORY OF LIPPE-DETMOLD.

### CHAPTER I.

#### AT THE PIED LAMB.

THREE years ago,—that is to say, in the year of grace 1865,—the little German principality of Lippe-Detmold came perhaps as near to being the realisation of an ideal “Land of Cockaigne” as ever did any sublunary territory. It may still, for aught I know, be a pleasant residence, combining many advantages for those whose leisure is large, and whose means are not so. But the beginning of the little story which I have to tell concerns the state of Lippe-Detmold three years ago, and deals with the fortunes of some humble and obscure individuals who then resided in that tiny principality. Very beautiful and rich woodlands adorn the country, and afford an immense revenue to its ruler,—a revenue which, in Germany, it would be saying very little indeed to term princely. But the woods and forests, although forming perhaps the chief boast and riches of Lippe-Detmold, are by no means the only signs of material prosperity to be found there. In every one of its few small hamlets and villages the stranger may perceive great barns of a very peculiar construction,—which I shall presently have occasion to describe more particularly,—with vast high roofs, and quaint inscriptions carved in wood over the doorways, importing that within is heaped goodly store of grain, and hay, and straw, food for man and fodder for beast, and always making reverent acknowledgment of the truth that “the earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof,” after a simple, pious, thoroughly German fashion. Farming, therefore, as well as forestry, is understood and practised in Lippe. Perhaps a Norfolk proprietor of a thousand acres would scarcely deign to regard the small patch of corn-land, carved out of the skirts of the woodlands, as worthy to be termed a farm; and possibly an English agricultural labourer, accustomed to steam-

ploughs and patent thrashing machines, might stare with contempt at the rude implements by whose aid the Lippian peasant tills his mother earth, and piles up great heaps of food in his granaries. But nevertheless, three years ago plenty smiled in the farmsteads of Lippe-Detmold, and peace brooded softly with sleepy, folded wings over the land. Political peace and social security were there. As to domestic peace, which depends not on "amicable relations" with great governments, nor on the mild sway of a sovereign, however light his yoke, that, I suppose, suffered the same occasional flaws and interruptions in this model state that it is subject to in other communities of the sons of Adam.

If external circumstances could have insured harmony in any assemblage of men, surely one might have looked for it amongst the little company gathered together in the Speise-Saal,—eating-room,—of the Pied Lamb inn at Horn, on one frosty September evening in the year 1865. Horn is a small and singularly picturesque townlet, about seven or eight miles from Detmold. Its one long, wide street contains a series of treasures for the artist, in the shape of old houses with towering steep roofs and carved gable-ends. The inn of the Pied Lamb is not one of the most picturesque of these tenements, having its front facing the street, instead of, as in the majority of cases, its narrow gable-end, and bearing a comparatively modern and smartened-up air. But there are worse places in which to spend the dark hours of an autumn evening than the long low Speise-Saal of the Pied Lamb. Any lack of artistic merit in the fittings of the room was more than compensated for, in the eyes of its habitual frequenters, by the decided air of comfort,—as comfort is understood in Horn,—which pervaded it. The floor was strewn with fine white sand, that crackled under one's footsteps; a towering white earthenware stove, that filled up one end of the apartment, sent forth an oven-like heat which gave a baked flavour to the atmosphere; and breathing was rendered a yet more difficult process to unaccustomed lungs by reason of dense clouds of tobacco smoke that hung heavily in the air, and curled slowly around the thick, clumsy beams of the ceiling. But the place was undeniably very warm, and gave admission to as little of the outer oxygen as was at all compatible with human existence. So the inhabitants of Horn found the Speise-Saal of the Pied Lamb an extremely comfortable, and even luxurious place of resort. I have said that if external circumstances could insure harmony amongst men, the little company assembled there on the autumn night in question might have been expected to be very harmonious. They were all near neighbours and old acquaintance; they were warm; they had just partaken of a hearty supper; they were enjoying the ambrosial fumes of their pipes; each man had on the long narrow table before him a tall glass filled with beer, while behind him there hung, fastened to a nail in the wall, a leather cushion covered with knitted

work, so placed as to afford a comfortable rest for the back of his head ; thus combining ease with cleanliness, and preventing the blue and white stencilled wall from receiving any soil or sign of having been rubbed. Outward circumstances were surely favourable to placidity and good fellowship, but yet there were sounds of dissent and discord to be heard amid the stream of noisy gutturals that was being poured forth by the various members of the party. Let us look and listen awhile, and thus gather a little preliminary information as to some of the chief personages concerned in the simple tale I have to tell.

First let us glance at the host, Herr Quendel, landlord of the principal inn at Horn, and in his own and his fellow-townsmen's estimation a man of mark and authority. A man of weight he certainly was, being enormously fat and unwieldy. He had a shapeless clean-shaven face, a closely-cropped head of grizzled hair, which grew in so regular and marked a form on his forehead as to look at first sight like a grey velvet skull-cap, and a deep, grating voice. Next to Herr Quendel, who occupied an arm-chair nearest to the stove, sat Herr Peters, the apothecary of the town. This gentleman presented a laughable contrast to Quendel in his outward appearance. Peters was tall, and lean, and sandy-haired, wore glasses, and had hanging about his garments an undefined, but distinctly perceptible odour of drugs. That is to say, the odour of drugs was perceptible in Peters's garments under ordinary circumstances ; but in the *Speise-Saal* of the *Pied Lamb* the smell of tobacco smoke victoriously asserted its supremacy over all other smells whatsoever. Next to Peters sat Simon Schnarcher, the sacristan,—or Küster, as the Germans have it,—by many years the oldest, and by many degrees the sourest and sharpest-tempered of the party,—a keen-eyed, yellow-skinned, bald-headed old fellow, with thin bloodless lips, a nose like a hawk's beak, and a back so bowed as to present almost the appearance of a hump. These three worthies were engaged in eager discussion, and bore in fact the chief part in what talk was being held. The rest of the company,—consisting of farmers, small shopkeepers, and a stray commercial traveller,—uttered only occasional grunts of assent or dissent, and enjoyed the loud word-combat that was going on in their presence with a placid sense of being snugly out of harm's way in their stronghold of silence, such as one may imagine to have been the predominant sentiment in the breast of some smug Roman citizen looking down on the perils of the arena from the secure elevation of his seat in the Coliseum.

"But I say," cried Peters, the apothecary, in a high, thin voice, "I say that the world won't stand still, whatever we may wish !"

"It is our business, sir," said Quendel majestically, "to make it still, and keep it still."

Grunts of approbation from the prosperous farmers. The commercial traveller fidgeted slightly on his seat, and played with his

pinchbeck watch-chain. He had not been driving a thriving trade in Horn, and possibly thought the doctrine just enunciated by the landlord scarcely calculated to extend his business connection.

"Still, still, still, I say," repeated Quendel in his deep rough tones, and looking like the incarnation of immobility in his own ponderous person, "let us alone. Let us be at peace. Let us enjoy the blessings of Providence in quiet and thankfulness. The world is well enough, if we would but let it alone. I find it a very good world indeed, and I have lived now some five-and-fifty years in it, and not altogether in an obscure position either."

"Surely, surely, Herr Landlord," replied Peters humbly, "there is no doubt that you are a man much looked up to, none more so in the principality. But what I mean is, that if the world won't stand still,—and I'm afraid there's no use in our trying to make it,—why, our business ought to be to,—to guide, to direct the movement, as it were, into a right channel."

"And I," snarled old Schnarcher, "don't agree with either of you. I say and maintain that so far from encouraging new-fangled notions,—so far from even letting things stay as they are,—it is our business, and every man's business, to push them back into the old grooves."

"And how far back, sir, would you push things into the old grooves that you talk of?" broke in the commercial traveller impatiently. "I suppose you wouldn't quite go back to the beginning of the world? Would 1848 be your limit, for instance?"

Schnarcher glared at the speaker from under his bushy white brows. The eyes of all the assembly were turned upon this daring stranger. To them he did seem very daring.

"How old may you be, sir?" demanded Schnarcher with much deliberation.

"How old? Well, I don't see what that has to do with it, but I don't mind telling my age. I'm six-and-thirty,—quite old enough to remember '48."

"And I," rejoined Schnarcher, still glaring steadfastly at the other, "was seventy-nine last Pentecost."

With that he turned his back full on the stranger with the air of one who had victoriously put a stop to any further attempt at argument from him.

There was a low murmur of admiration throughout the company. No man could have told why the fact of old Schnarcher's having been seventy-nine last Pentecost should be considered to have completely gravelled his opponent, but each man had a vague idea that it was so. The commercial traveller shrugged his shoulders disdainfully, but said no more. Public opinion was too strong for him. After a while the sacristan resumed ;—

"We're all astray. New fashions and new notions are the ruin of us. The boys' heads are turned with them, and nowadays it seems



that the boys are to rule the men. That used to be thought neither according to sense nor Scripture in my time. But I suppose we shall 'progress,'—pouf! I hate the sound of the word!—until we come to be governed by babies in swaddling-clothes."

Old Schnarcher spoke with intense bitterness, and his sunken eyes sparkled angrily, and the grim laugh with which he finished his speech was not a pleasant sound to hear. There was a short uneasy silence. Nearly all present were aware that the sacristan had lately been at variance with his grand-nephew, an orphan lad, whom he had partly educated and brought up, and whose rebellious behaviour was a peculiarly sore point with the old man. Now this grand-nephew,—Otto Hemmerich by name,—was personally a great favourite with the little community at Horn. Simon Schnarcher, on the other hand, although a man of unimpeachably correct and orthodox principles, was not much beloved. Which state of things was certainly very strange, seeing that old Simon was always in the right, and poor Otto always in the wrong!

Herr Quendel poured forth an unusually large volume of smoke from his mouth, and remarked, as though the sacristan had been expressly discussing his nephew's behaviour, "And how is Otto going on now, Herr Küster? I haven't seen him for some time past."

This abrupt descent from generals to particulars was not calculated to soften the acerbity of old Simon's temper. "Otto!" he repeated. "What, my boy Otto? Oh! he's all right enough, thank ye. Otto Hemmerich, eh? Now what put him into your head, I wonder?"

It was Simon's constant practice not only to ignore the fact that his grand-nephew differed from him on certain important points, but to assume, with dogged persistency, that any such difference of opinion between them was too wildly impossible a thing to be conceived. Presently he went on again;—

"Ah, now I'd wager it was my talking of babies in swaddling-clothes set your mind running on Otto. 'Tis but the other day he was a baby himself."

"Lord, ay!" rejoined Quendel solemnly. "How the time goes! Now he's as strapping a Junker as any in Lippe."

"And it seems to me," said Franz Lehmann, a weather-beaten farmer, "it seems to me no more than a week ago,—though it must be ten good years, as I reckon,—that his father, the head-ranger, was carried home one morning from the forest with three of his ribs broken, and his side bleeding and torn by the antlers of a stag, and his rifle twisted up just like,—like——"

"Like a corkscrew," suggested the host.

"How the boy took on, to be sure!" said Lehmann.

"Took on!" echoed Peters. "Nobody knows how he felt it. Nobody but me knows how that motherless boy nursed his father, and

sat up with him night after night, and gave him his physic, and placed his bandages, and——Talk of women! That twelve-year-old lad was a better nurse than fifty women."

Peters was a bachelor, and somewhat of a misogynist.

"Fifty!" exclaimed Franz Lehmann. "Well, I don't know about fifty! But women ain't bad to have round you when you're sick. My old woman looked after me, and cockered me up last winter when I had the rheumatism in all my joints, and I tell you there were times when I couldn't bear any hand but hers nigh me. No, no, women can nurse, mind ye!"

"And they can cook,—some of 'em," said Quendel musingly. His voice was almost tender as he spoke. There are reminiscences which have a softening influence on the least susceptible.

"And if a man's a bit of a fool to begin with, they can make a bigger fool yet of him," observed Schnarcher, with a ghastly grim on his puckered face.

Somehow, there had come to be a shade of constraint and ill-humour over the company, which nothing but a temporary separation would dissipate. One by one the guests rose to go, each man first putting on his hat, and then immediately taking it off again in parting salutation.

"Have you any commands in Detmold, Herr Landlord?" asked Peters, pausing at the door. The apothecary had eased his spare form in a long coat with a sheepskin collar and cuffs, and peered out from beneath a cloth cap which left but little of his face visible save his sharp pink nose.

"In Detmold? Ay, ay! Are you going to Detmold?"

"Yes, to-morrow, to buy drugs."

"I wish, Herr Peters," said Farmer Lehmann, "that you would do us the kindness to take a little bit of a parcel for our Lieschen. My wife has put some fal-lals together that the child needs, she tells me."

"Surely. I shall be driving by your place on my road, and I'll call for the parcel. Good night."

Old Schnarcher hobbled out side by side with the apothecary. They walked together for some distance up the wide, dark, silent street. "Lehmann's Liese," muttered the sacristan bitterly. "There's another of 'em."

"Another of what, Herr Küster?" was his companion's not unnatural query.

"Another of the pretty sly minxes that make fools of their betters."

"Lieschen is a right, good, honest little maiden," protested Peters. His general misogyny did not prevent him from making exceptions in favour of certain individuals of the sex.

"Bah!" cried the old man savagely. I cannot render on paper

the sound he uttered. It was more like the bark of an angry dog than anything else. "Don't tell me! They're none of 'em good for much, but the pretty ones are the devil!"

Peters took this outbreak very much as a matter of course. He possessed a clue which enabled him to understand Simon Schnarcher's bitter ill-humour. To make the reader understand it also must be the object of my endeavours in the following chapter.

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## CHAPTER II

### UNCLE AND NEPHEW.

OTTO HEMMERICH's father, the head-ranger, had married in a way that had gravely offended his uncle, old Simon Schnarcher. The head-ranger had lived a bachelor until he was close upon thirty years old, and had then wedded a pretty penniless peasant girl.

The sacristan of the parish church in an obscure, insignificant German town was not likely to be a rich man. But by dint of saving and scraping throughout the course of a solitary life, Simon Schnarcher had gathered some money together, and was popularly supposed to have gathered more. He had inherited a house and a piece of garden-land, and lived upon his own small domain. His connection with the church, and the rigidity of his Protestant orthodoxy, were considered in Horn to be extremely respectable. He had, too, that strong faith in his own wisdom and the foolishness of almost everybody else which helped him, as it has helped many another man, to impose his will upon those around him. So that altogether Simon Schnarcher was little accustomed to meet with opposition either in word or deed. But one day his nephew and presumptive heir fell in love; and being in love, became at once insensible to the Solomonic precepts and authoritative advice with which the sacristan favoured him on the subject of marriage.

In brief, he took to wife little Lotte Müller,—Little Lotte Müller, whose brown bare feet were acquainted with every tangled path in the forest, and whose short, agile figure he had often furtively watched as she carried food to her father, the charcoal-burner. It was a connection entirely distasteful to Schnarcher, and he looked upon his nephew's marriage as a piece of unspeakable folly. Hemmerich, on the contrary, always declared that marrying Lotte had been the one wise action of his life. At all events, wise or unwise, he never once repented it up to the day of his wife's death. But this did not prevent old Simon from considering the marriage a very foolish one all the same. His nephew had been bewitched, he said, by a pretty face and an artful assumption of gentleness and simplicity. It was in vain to urge that Lotte the matron continued to be as simple and as gentle as Lotte the maiden

had been. That was her cunning, said Simon. "It would be well then if other folks could be as cunning! Lotte's cunning makes my life sweet and my home happy," retorted Hemmerich. And then the uncle and nephew had quarrelled seriously, and had ceased to speak to each other.

After eight peaceful, happy years of married life, Lotte died, leaving to the care of her bereaved husband a little son named Otto. Many of the least personally selfish among women have a keen, shrewd eye to the main chance on behalf of those whom they love. For herself Lotte Hemmerich desired nothing. For her husband and Otto she could be almost greedy. The estrangement between Hemmerich and his uncle had given her many an uneasy and self-reproachful thought.

Had it not been for her, Hemmerich would still have been the heir to all the sacristan's savings. And when her son was born these regrets became intensified. But all her efforts to bring about a reconciliation between the uncle and nephew were unavailing. Hemmerich resented the terms in which Schnarcher had spoken of his wife, and the old man would neither recall his words nor yield an inch in any way. After his wife's death the head-ranger was still less inclined to seek his uncle with words of humility on his lips. To have done so would have appeared, he fancied, like a slight to Lotte's memory. He devoted himself exclusively to his boy, refusing to be separated from him even for a moment. The little Otto was his father's companion in all excursions through the wild woodland country which the nature of his avocations required him frequently to traverse.

Many a moonlit night saw them threading the forest paths side by side. Sometimes the little one was perched on his father's shoulder; but more often his short, pattering footsteps rustled ankle-deep in fallen leaves, and his shrill, childish voice, mimicking the hunter's cry, awoke the sylvan echoes and startled the drowsy deer from their lair.

A strong vein of romance ran through Hemmerich's character. He was a man of some education, and had the love of reading which may be said to be almost a national characteristic of Germany. Active as his life necessarily was, there were many hours of the long winter evenings when the lonely lodge in the forest sent forth a bright red glow from its windows, and in the shine of the flaming pine-logs sat the head-ranger, with his boy on the hearth at his feet, the father reading or reciting aloud some old ballad or more modern poem, whilst the son employed his strong, skilful young hands in cleaning a pet rifle, or in manufacturing some cunning spring to snare the woodland creatures. Hemmerich had, too, a store of legends. Many were such as are to be found throughout Germany,—stories of wild huntsmen and magic bullets, of witch meetings and ghostly apparitions. But these were not Otto's favourites. He had not the dreaminess that formed part of his father's nature. The

legends Otto loved were those which related the exploits, the vicissitudes, and final triumph of the German hero, Hermann. The story of the Teuton chief's patriotic resistance to the Romans, and of his great victory over Varus, was one to which the boy was never weary of listening. And often in the summer dawn he would climb the commanding height whereon the Hermann's Denkmal,—monument,—stands, and watching the sunshine creep over the wide plain spread beneath him, make high resolves in his boyish heart that should the day ever come to test his patriotism, he, too, would be ready to fight and fall for fatherland.

This wild forest life was Otto's until he was nearly twelve years old; and by that time he knew the haunts and habits of every sort of bird, beast, and reptile that dwells in the great leafy solitudes of Lippe-Deilmold. Then came a change.

An accident, which it imports nothing to my story to relate in detail, brought the sacristan into contact with his grand-nephew, and the old man performed on that occasion an unprecedented act of generosity. He permitted the lad to fill his pockets from the ripe red store of apples on a tree in his own garden, and sent Otto home to the hunting-lodge in the forest, where his father dwelt, to give an account of the interview, which surprised the head-ranger not a little.

Men seldom avow their motives. And the good motives are quite as often disavowed as the bad ones. Simon would not have confessed it, but the real cause which produced in him the unaccustomed effect of kindness lay in a strong resemblance that young Otto Hemmerich bore to his grandmother. The wrinkled, crabbed, grasping old sacristan had once been a young, smooth-cheeked boy, whose shortcomings were hidden, and whose selfish faults were condoned, by a kind, motherly elder sister, named Dorothea. Now, little Otto, in some expressions of his frank face, was the living image of his dead grandmother, this very Dorothea.

After the boy had gone home, Simon Schnarcher sat musing until his pipe was cold. And there appeared before him out of the mist of the vanished years a sweet grave face and a girlish figure, to which a large family of younger brothers and sisters habitually turned for help and comfort in every trouble,—from a stocking that needed darning to an unfortunate attachment.

"Dorothea was a good woman," murmured the sacristan. "There are no women like my sister Dorothea, nowadays. I'm glad that boy doesn't resemble his mother's family."

Little more than a fortnight had elapsed, when the tidings came into Horn that Head-ranger Hemmerich had been attacked and badly wounded by a stag, and that he lay on what the doctor pronounced must be his death-bed. Otto's devotion to his father was the theme of talk for many a mile round. The doctor, in the course of his daily

visits, sounded Otto's praises unwearyingly, and thus there was much sympathy aroused for the motherless lad, and many speculations were afloat as to what would become of him when his father should be dead. These speculations were set at rest in a manner entirely unexpected by the good people of Horn. The day after his father's funeral, Otto Hemmerich was installed as an inmate in the sacristan's somewhat gloomy house, and within a fortnight he had become a regular attendant at the principal school of the place, and had apparently settled down unresistingly into a life as different as it is possible to conceive from that which he had led hitherto.

How all this had been brought about neither Schnarcher nor the boy ever troubled themselves to relate, and there was consequently a good deal of disappointment among the gossips. But the matter had been very simple, and the reader may be put in possession of it in a few words.

The old man had visited his dying nephew, and had offered to adopt and educate Otto,—should the boy be left fatherless,—to make him his heir, and, in short, to place him in the position which Hemmerich had forfeited by his marriage. The situation of his son had been Hemmerich's chief anxiety. He was not afraid to die, but he was afraid to leave Otto unprotected in the world; and he suffered some pangs of conscience, which gave him more pain than his wounds, from the consideration that Otto's education had not been such as to fit him to help himself. The sacristan's offer was at once gratefully accepted by the dying man, who declared, and truly, that it had taken a load from his heart. But it was not found quite so easy to induce Otto to acquiesce in this arrangement. He shrank with the horror of some wild, untamed creature of the woods,—and such in truth he was,—from the idea of being shut up in a city. To him Horn was a city,—nay, more, a prison. All arguments based upon his own welfare and interest fell powerless upon the weeping boy, who clung to his father's hand, and implored him not to send him away.

"Not as long as I last, my Otto. You shall stay with father to the end."

"But you won't die, father!—I'm sure you won't die! And if you were to be taken away, I don't care what becomes of me. I would rather be left alone here in the forest."

Then Hemmerich explained how great an anxiety the thought of his son's helpless condition had been to him, and how Simon Schnarcher's offer had relieved his conscience of a heavy load. "I haven't done my duty by you, my Otto," said he; "but you must help me to do it now, like a brave boy as you are. And besides, your blessed mother always wished so earnestly that my uncle and I should be reconciled."

"I will do whatever you tell me, father," whispered Otto, after a

pause. And when the time came for fulfilling this pledge, the boy kept his word to the letter.

Otto never uttered a complaint; and indeed his great-uncle was agreeably surprised by the quiet, almost stolid way in which he accepted all the somewhat stringent regulations that were laid down for his conduct, and by the implicit obedience with which he endeavoured to comply with them. But no human being knew or guessed the sufferings undergone by the lonely boy during the early days of his new life. Perhaps Herr Peters, the apothecary, came nearer than any one else to understanding him. There had grown up a sort of intimacy between the apothecary and Otto when the latter was in the habit of coming frequently to the Apotheke in Horn to get medicines for his father; and Peters comprehended somewhat of the suppressed feelings which the lad hid instinctively from unsympathising eyes.

"Some birds can't live in cages," said the apothecary, looking at Otto's downcast face, and shaking his head. But boys are not birds; and thoroughly healthy children of twelve years old do not,—Heaven be praised!—pine away and die of grief. So Otto Hemmerich grew and thrived, and gradually reconciled himself to his new existence. But the old free woodland life never lost its hold on his heart. Not a holiday passed, wet or dry, without his revisiting some of the well-loved forest-haunts that his father had taught him to know. For book-learning, to say truth, Otto Hemmerich showed no special bent; but in all sports or employments requiring personal courage, strength, or dexterity, he reigned supreme over his schoolfellows by virtue of undisputed superiority.

Simon Schnarcher's theory of the education and bringing-up of young people did not, as may be supposed, err on the side of soft indulgence. Absolute, unquestioning obedience he exacted from his grand-nephew; and the lad's docility and natural sound-heartedness were such as to enable the sacristan to boast loudly,—behind Otto's back,—of the successful results of old-fashioned strictness in training and educating children. By degrees old Schnarcher grew to look upon Otto's good qualities and extended popularity in the neighbourhood as being the direct results of his,—Schnarcher's,—profound wisdom. "Ah," he would say, shaking his head solemnly, "if Otto's father, my poor nephew Hemmerich, could but have had the advantage of being brought up by me, things would have gone differently, I promise you. You won't catch Otto disgracing himself by marrying a barefooted peasant-wench!"

Once some such word escaped him in Otto's presence, and the boy rose up instantly with such a fire of indignation in his young face as made the old man quail for a moment,—albeit he had a stubborn will and tough nerves of his own,—and declared that another word of dis-



respect to the memory of his dead mother would send him forth from that house for ever, though he had to beg his bread on the highways.

"Tush!" cried Schnarcher, "you're a fool, boy." But he deemed it prudent to say no more about Otto's mother.

This was the first occasion on which old Simon Schnarcher had had a glimpse of the reserve-force of courage and decision that lay quietly beneath Otto's habitual gentleness. The feeling with which he discovered the existence of these unsuspected qualities was, strange to say, not altogether one of displeasure. Contest was very agreeable to Simon's nature. He looked forward with some zest to the task of battling with, and overcoming, his nephew's spirit. The idea that the victory might possibly be the other way never once entered his head. However, matters went on peaceably enough until Otto reached an age at which it was necessary to decide on his future calling in life. Then Schnarcher informed him, as one who pronounces an irrevocable decree, that he was to go into the church, and that the necessary funds would be forthcoming to complete his education with that view. "But, uncle," returned Otto, "I cannot be a pastor; I have no taste for preaching and teaching. I know I could not be a good pastor, and I will not be a bad one." Astonishment made the sacristan quite meek for the moment.

"Might I inquire, sir," he asked with deceptive calmness, "what business in life you do intend to follow?"

"I should like best to be a Jäger, a huntsman and forester, like my father. But I will do whatever you desire as far as I can. As to being a pastor, that I cannot do."

The storm that followed needs not to be described, but once more Simon retreated from the conflict, telling himself that it was absurd to argue with a mere boy, and that his will would surely prevail in the end. With this idea Otto was sent to college. Going to college in Germany is quite a different matter from being matriculated at Oxford or Cambridge. It implies,—to mention one difference alone,—no such social status as is, speaking broadly, understood amongst ourselves in the phrase, "a University man." Otto went to Halle, and returned to Lippe-Detmold from Halle; but he was as far as ever from consenting to embrace the profession on which his uncle had determined for him. Then the old man's heart became full to overflowing of bitterness and disappointment. He found himself baffled, and by one whom he had cited as the model result of his own training. In his anger he recalled Otto's words, "I will do whatever you desire as far as I can."

"If you are not a pastor you shall be a tradesman," said Simon. "There can be no scruples of conscience against that!"

The sacristan lost no time in going over to Detmold to see an old acquaintance of his there, a bookseller and stationer. It was agreed between them that Otto should be bound to the bookseller for three



years as his assistant, and Schnarcher returned in triumph to announce this arrangement to his grand-nephew. For not only to the outside world, but to Otto himself, Schnarcher kept up the fiction that all was going in accordance with his will. "I have changed my mind about you," he announced with autocratic brevity, and the young man made no protest against the form of words. He did desire to obey his uncle as far as he conscientiously might do so. In refusing to become a pastor, it is possible that his conscience may have been invigorated by a strain of the family obstinacy.

Affairs were in this position on the September night when I introduced my reader to the Speise-Saal of the Pied Lamb. And Herr Peters's thoughts were running much upon his friend the sacristan's family affairs as the apothecary drove the next morning out of Horn behind his corpulent, old white pony.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### A LIPPE-DETMOLD FARM.

THE road from Horn to Detmold lies in great part through a country rich with noble woods. It winds along with gentle rolling undulations of hill and dale, skirted by beech, oak, pine, and birch trees. September had dyed the varied foliage with lavish wealth of colour. The sun shone brightly out of a pale blue sky, and there was enough autumnal crispness in the air to make the sense of motion exhilarating. Herr Peters, the apothecary, jogged along pleasantly behind his plump pony. The roads were hard and smooth, so that the wheels of the clumsy chaise rolled over them very easily. In fact, it would have given the pony more trouble to walk than to trot; therefore the pony trotted. Peters was very glad that the old Schimmel chose to go somewhat briskly, and I may say felt grateful for his steed's unwonted alacrity; for both man and beast knew right well that the Schimmel would not under any circumstances be incited to mend his pace by flogging.

I have said that the apothecary's thoughts were running on Simon Schnarcher's family affairs. He thought of the sacristan's angry bitterness in last night's talk. He thought of Otto, and wondered how the young fellow would endure life behind a counter in Detmold. He reflected that the new arrangement would content neither uncle nor nephew; for it is scarcely needful to say that old Schnarcher's pretence that there was not, and never could be, any question of disputing his will, imposed on none of his old friends and neighbours.

"Otto wants to be a forester, like his father," said Peters to himself. "Simon wants him to be a pastor. But the sacristan compromises matters by making the lad a tradesman, which pleases neither of them. Simon Schnarcher is a long-headed man, but in this I think

him wrong. In his place, if I could not please myself, I would please the lad, instead of vexing both myself and him for nothing." But in so saying Herr Peters showed very little knowledge of human nature in general, and of his friend Schnarcher's nature in particular. In the midst of his meditations Peters arrived before the house of Farmer Franz Lehmann, and pulled up the pony rather suddenly. The Lehmann's house was an admirable specimen of a kind of dwelling which, as far as I know, is peculiar to Lippe-Detmold and the country immediately adjoining the little principality. In my first chapter I said that I should presently have occasion to describe with some minuteness one of the great buildings which give a distinctive character to the rural architecture of Lippe, and I cannot better fulfil that intention than in placing before my reader, with what vividness I can command, a picture of the singular old home-stead wherein the family of the Lehmanns had dwelt for generations.

A great, nearly square, timber-framed, brick building, low at the overhanging eaves, but with a sloping roof so extraordinarily and disproportionately vast as to run up to the height of a tall, three-storied house at its sharp apex. This roof is of bright red tiles, just sufficiently weather-stained and moss-grown to be picturesquely mellow in their tone of colour. The cross-timbers of the house beneath are black, and rudely, though lavishly carved, the interstices between them being painted a warm cream colour. The building, although nearly square, is yet not quite so, and stands with its narrowest side, or gable-end, towards the road. In the middle of this gable-end yawns an enormously wide and lofty arched doorway, the centre of which is precisely beneath the topmost angle of the towering roof; and the long lines of tiling slope rapidly down on either hand, and terminate in projecting eaves not more than ten feet from the ground. The reason for making so seemingly disproportionate an entrance as the great arch with its heavy wooden folding-doors is not apparent until you step within the threshold, but then it becomes at once obvious. The whole centre of the building is a large and lofty barn, piled high with hay and straw and store of grain. It is, too, a storehouse for farm implements, and so huge are its proportions, that a harvest waggon laden with sheaves, and drawn by three or four sturdy horses, can pass easily through the doorway, and stand beneath its ample shelter. From the barn, which entirely occupies the central length and breadth of the building, is the only possible ingress to the dwelling-house. On the right hand and on the left are doors and windows giving access to the living and sleeping rooms of the family. Nearly all the light and air which reaches these apartments gains admission through the wide-open double doors of the barn. Nearly all the light and air; but in the special dwelling which I am endeavouring to describe there was a range of small lattice casements under the eaves, into

which the last low rays of the setting sun managed to penetrate. The majority of these barn-dwellings have absolutely no exterior windows whatsoever. And the existence of Farmer Lehmann's case-ments was by many persons considered to be rather a disadvantage than an advantage.

"It is so snug when there are no windows outside," said the Lippe-Detmolders, "and the barn keeps the house right warm. There is no stove so good as a barn full of straw." Which was doubtless all very true, granting,—what the Lippe-Detmolders mostly assumed,—that fresh air is neither necessary nor desirable. However, in a purely picturesque sense, no one could deny that the little diamond-paned lattices, half buried in vine leaves, improved the aspect of the dwelling immensely. Farmer Lehmann's was an old house, and the vine trained over one side of it was old too, and rich in leaves, if not in grapes. The aspect of the farmyard would, I fear, have disgusted an English farmer. There was a great dunghill at one side of the door, and an indescribably filthy pond, wherein some fat ducks disported themselves with obvious enjoyment. Three or four mild-eyed cows with steaming nostrils stood knee-deep in litter by the closed cattle-shed. A mastiff lay blinking in front of his kennel, and barked now and then at the passers-by in a lazy, muffled voice. A family of lean, long-legged pigs was busily investigating the delicacies of a heap of heterogeneous scraps flung out from the kitchen; cocks and hens promenaded, with the self-sufficient air peculiar to their species, in and out and about the barn; and on the high-peaked roof a tribe of patriarchal pigeons cooed and sunned their shining wings. Over the doorway was carved an inscription, which, as it is a fair sample of many similar inscriptions in the country, I may here translate:—"Within is goodly store of food for man and beast. Behold, nowhere shall you find a garner fuller filled, or more overflowing with abundance. Gerhard Lehmann and Marthe Sieger, his wife, built this dwelling, and placed this inscription to the honour and glory of Almighty God, in the year 1679. He openeth His hand, and all things living are filled with good."

The sound of wheels on the hard road, and the barking of the old mastiff, brought Franz Lehmann to the door, and he advanced to greet Peters.

"Welcome, Herr Apothecary. I take it friendly of you not to forget us. So-ho, old Schimmel! You'd better drive right into the barn, Herr Peters. The threshing-floor is clear now, and 'tis ill standing still in this sharp air for either man or beast."

In this view of the case the fat pony appeared to coincide, for he immediately set off unguided for the shelter of the barn, taking the shortest line for the attainment of his object, and thereby tilting up the chaise and Herr Peters in it at a dangerous angle, as the wheels bumped heavily over heaps of refuse, and splashed through the duck-

pond. However, steed and driver arrived safely within the great warm barn, and there Peters alighted to pay his respects to the Haus-frau. To this end, he accompanied the farmer through one of the little low doors that opened from the barn, and passed into a long, stone-flagged kitchen. It was lighted on one side by three of the outer vine-draped casements, and on the other by two square, unglazed apertures near the roof, which were at this moment almost blocked up by a towering pile of wheat-sacks in the barn. On the floor were ranged a quantity of wide, shallow baskets filled with ruddy apples; and at an oaken dresser stood the Haus-frau and two sturdy maidens, peeling, coring, and cutting up the fruit, which was handed to them as they needed it by a barefooted little goose-herd, temporarily pressed into the domestic service. The farmer's wife dropped her knife and wiped her hands on her apron before offering one of them to her visitor.

"Ach je, Herr Peters!" she exclaimed, with as much astonishment in her voice as though she had not been expecting him all the morning, "now this is kind! I have the parcel ready for Lieschen,—a small parcel it is,—only a couple of neckerchiefs, real Manchester print they are,"—I would that I could convey to my reader any idea of the sound Frau Lehmann made in uttering the word Manchester,— "and two pairs of worsted stockings,—a bit darned, it's true, but my own knitting, and real warm for winter wear; and I'm sure the child will be thankful to you, Herr Apothecary, for taking the trouble to carry them to her; for as to me, there ain't much chance of my getting to Detmold this side Christmas, and all the hams to cure, and,—only see,—the apple compôte but just begun, as one may say!"

Frau Lehmann uttered all this with great rapidity, and in the high cackling voice peculiar to uneducated German women; and when she paused for breath, she wiped her hands once more on her cotton apron. She was a bony, active, hard-featured woman, with a shrewish light in her grey eyes, and her serving-maids were obviously afraid of her.

"I will do your errand willingly, Frau Lehmann," said Peters; "the more so that little Liese was always a favourite of mine from the first day I saw her."

"Ah, poor little maid," broke in the farmer, "how small and strange she looked amongst us all that first evening I brought her here! But she was so sweet in her temper and so soft and handy in her ways, that——"

"There, there, that's Franz Lehmann all over," said the mistress of the house sharply. She was tying an extra string round the parcel to be sent to Detmold, and gave it as she spoke so sudden a jerk that it snapped. "Franz Lehmann, once he gets on one of his hobbies, will talk and prose and dream for an hour, and the precious minutes galloping away all the time, and everything to do and to see to. Liese was small and strange then, sure enough; and

she's small and strange now for that matter! Nobody in all this world but Franz Lehmann would have thought of saddling himself with other folks' children, as if there wasn't mouths enough to feed already, and the boys especially, eating one out of house and home."

The little goose-herd, knowing himself to be one of the omnivorous boys in question, was so overwhelmed with confusion at being thus publicly alluded to, that he let fall an armful of apples, which rolled swiftly in various directions. And under cover of the consequent confusion, Peters made a hasty farewell and withdrew, bearing the parcel for which he had come. Lehmann accompanied him to the chaise, and walked at the pony's head as far as the high-road. The farmer broke silence only when they had reached the boundary of his own land.

"You won't take any notice of what my old woman says about Lieschen, Herr Peters?"

"Not at all," said the apothecary; but he had not a very clear idea of his own meaning.

"You see my old woman she's,—she's an excellent body. Not a better wife in the principality. There ain't many housewives that would be as kind to a stranger's child, brought home to her without 'with your leave,' or 'by your leave,' as she has been to Lieschen. Are there, now?"

"N—no," answered Peters, the misogynist, "I don't think women mostly are kind to other folks' children."

"Well, there it is, you see, Herr Apothecary. We never had no little ones of our own; not to live, that is. Our only babe, she didn't stay many days in this world, and it well-nigh broke Hanne's heart. She has a sharp way with her sometimes, has Hanne, but, dear Heaven! if you had seen her then. Well, then, you understand, when I brought home little Lieschen, and said, 'Wife, this is the child of a dear dead cousin of mine, and we must give her shelter and home with us,' why, she just looked at the little one, and burst out a-crying, and got up and went away without a word. When she came back again, she fed and tended the child right motherly, and she's done well by her ever since."

"I suppose Lieschen went to service at Detmold quite of her own will, then?"

Franz Lehmann's honest face grew a shade graver as he answered, "Yes; of her own will? Yes. It was better for her not to stay at home. Lieschen never was fit for hard country work, and my old woman keeps her lasses pretty tight to it. Then Hanne said I should spoil the maiden, and make a fool of her. Mayhap I might. But what I really think," added the farmer confidentially, lowering his voice, "is that it fretted my old woman a bit to see me so fond of Lieschen. She was——"

"Jealous," suggested Peters, with a nod.

"Well, jealous, if you like, but in a queer kind of a way. My belief is that every time I patted the child's head, or took her on my knee, Hanne thought of our own little daughter, and what she might have been if the Lord had spared her to us, and felt somehow as if I was robbing the little dead babe,—poor lamb!—by——. There, I can't speak it out clear, but I've got it all in my head like print."

However little the apothecary might agree with Frau Lehmann on most points, he could not but sympathise with her impatience of her husband's tendency to prose. Franz stood bareheaded, with his hand on the pony's mane, and his blue eyes placidly staring at vacancy, apparently unconscious of a keen north wind which made Peters sink his face deeper and deeper into his sheepskin collar. Peters was a mild and irresolute man. He wanted to proceed on his journey, but he did not know how to arrest the flow of Lehmann's slow, musing utterances. The old Schimmel, however, was neither mild nor irresolute, and having by this time finished munching a mouthful of hay surreptitiously extracted from a truss in the barn, and feeling, moreover, rather chilly, he rid himself of Lehmann's hand on his mane by a vigorous shake of the head, and started off down the road at a round pace. The chaise had rolled some distance before Peters could pull up the Schimmel to listen to something which the farmer was calling after him.

"Heart's love to my little Lieschen. And hark ye, Herr Apothecary, you must promise to come and eat roast goose with us this winter. You've never tasted my old woman's apple compôte! Real good she makes it. Don't forget."

"Apple compôte!" muttered Peters. "I'd rather have peace and quiet to sweeten the roast goose than any sauce yonder shrew could make. I know she'd turn the fruit sour only by looking at it." But he nodded a sort of assent, and waved his hand to the farmer, who was still standing bareheaded in the road. And then the pony, whose small stock of complaisance was now exhausted, broke into a determined trot, and went steadily at his own pace until they reached Detmold.

## HOW TO SETTLE THE EASTERN QUESTION.

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IN a previous article we endeavoured to place before our readers, as succinctly as possible, the condition of Greece, Servia, and Roumania, and to point out that none of those countries contained elements for what it is the fashion to call "the solution of the Eastern Question;" that is to say, that none of them offered a nucleus around which, in the event of the fall of the Ottoman rule in Europe, the various populations of the European provinces of Turkey could gather and form a Christian state sufficiently compact and powerful to maintain its independence, or sufficiently well governed to secure the contentment, happiness, and prosperity of the races, differing in origin and religion, which would inhabit it. We showed that the attempt to establish any such state would only introduce fresh elements of confusion into "the Eastern Question," would tend to promote the ambitious designs of Russia, and would lead, if not immediately to war, to the first step towards it, by necessitating the constant interference and intervention of the European Powers.

Let us now inquire whether, amongst the Christian populations still under the immediate rule of the Sultan,—that is to say, the Bulgarians, Bosnians, and Albanians,—there be one which could be substituted for the Turks, and which could become the dominant race of Turkey in Europe with any fair prospect of the establishment of a strong, independent, and settled government. Could these various races be consolidated into one Christian state, or could they be divided into several small independent states, like Greece and Servia, or could they form a confederation of states with republican institutions?

Before a satisfactory answer can be given to these questions, it is necessary to ascertain, as nearly as possible, the relative numbers of the Christians and Mohammedans forming the population of the provinces of Bosnia, Albania, Bulgaria, and Roumelia.\* But this is no easy matter. Statistics of any value are utterly wanting. Although the Turkish Government is believed to possess tolerably accurate returns upon the subject, they have never been published. The calculations which are to be found in modern works on Turkey are

\* For convenience-sake we include in Roumelia the provinces to the south of the Balkan, comprising ancient Macedonia and Thrace, and the modern governments or pashalics of Adrianople, Monastir, and Salonica, together with Constantinople, and its dependent districts. The Christian inhabitants of the country between the Danube and the Ægean Sea, with the exception of part of the populations of the cities and towns, are Bulgarians, and speak Slavonian.

altogether untrustworthy, and are generally based upon the political bias of the writer. In Bosnia there is reason to believe that the Mussulmans exceed the Christians in numbers. If the population be placed at one million, which is the ordinary computation, and is probably below the true number, we should say that the Mohammedans amount to about 600,000. They form a compact homogeneous race, with common interests, a common religion, and a common language. The Christians have been reckoned at 480,000, but these numbers comprise 280,000 belonging to the Greek Church, and 200,000 Latins or Roman Catholics. So that among the Christians there exists an antagonism of creed, which would render any complete and perfect union between them impossible. The proprietors of the soil are chiefly Mohammedans, but are the descendants of its ancient possessors, who changed their religion to keep their lands. Consequently they are of the same race and speak the same language as the Christians, and only differ from them in faith. The Mohammedans, however, having long belonged to the dominant class, and being accustomed to rule, are of a brave and warlike disposition, and inured to the use of arms. The Christians, naturally timid and afraid of the Mussulmans, and disunited on account of differences of creed, would be quite unable, without assistance from abroad, to rise successfully against them.

In Albania the Mohammedans probably exceed the Christians in the proportion of three to one, if we exclude the Southern districts, or Epirus, where the Christians are considerably in the majority. In this province, again, the landholders are principally Mohammedans, and the Christians, with the exception of some of the mountain tribes in the South, would not venture to rise against the Mussulmans. In Albania, too, it must be remembered that the Christians are disunited, being divided into two different sects, those of the Greek and those of the Catholic Church, though the former are much the more numerous.

It is very difficult indeed to come to any definite conclusion as to the populations of Bulgaria and Roumelia, as accounts on this subject vary so considerably. According to some writers the Christians are very greatly in the majority, and are perhaps more than double the Mohammedans. According to the authority of persons well acquainted with the country, such as Mr. Longworth, at present Her Majesty's Consul-General at Belgrade, who has filled the same post at Monastir, and has officially visited all parts of Bulgaria and Roumelia, the Turkish or Mohammedan population is much larger than is generally supposed, and is not much inferior in numbers, if at all, to the Christian.\*

There is this difference between the Mohammedan landholders in

\* It would be of great importance to obtain accurate statistics with regard to the populations of Turkey in Europe. We are convinced that at the present time the greatest ignorance prevails on the subject.



these provinces and those in Bosnia and Albania,—that they are not the descendants of the ancient proprietors of the soil, but, for the most part, of the Ottoman conquerors who occupied the country and appropriated the land. Consequently they differ in race and language from the Christians, who are descended from the original inhabitants. The Mohammedans, in fact, hold very much the same position in Bulgaria and Roumalia as the descendants of the English conquerors in Ireland, both as regards race, religion, and the possession of the land. The number of Christian landholders is, however, considerable, and is increasing. But the Christians are in general a timid and divided race, and have none of the warlike qualities of the Turks.

It is evident from what we have stated that in no part of Turkey in Europe would the Christians alone and single-handed have the slightest chance of success in an insurrection against the Turkish Government, supported as the Mohammedan population would be by the whole force of the empire. Without direct support and assistance from some foreign power, any attempt on their part to rise would inevitably end most disastrously. It must never be forgotten that the Mohammedans are perfectly well aware that a struggle with the Christians would be one for very life, and that in the event of a defeat their own fate would be literally expulsion from Europe and deprivation of their lands. It is not to be supposed that they would yield until every means of resistance had been exhausted, and until after terrible bloodshed.

But we will suppose for a moment that by the armed assistance of some European Power the Christian populations of Turkey in Europe had obtained the upper hand, and were to succeed in dispossessing the Mohammedans of their lands: could Bosnia and the other provinces be formed into independent states under Christian rulers, with a fair prospect of tranquillity, good government, and the development of free institutions? Would such an arrangement remove the danger which the weakness of the Turkish Empire is supposed to inflict on Europe? Would these Christian populations have greater elements of strength, would they be better able to maintain their independence than Turkey?

Neither the example of Greece, nor of Serbia, nor of the Danubian Principalities, has afforded much evidence in favour of such a solution of the Eastern question. The provinces of European Turkey still under direct Turkish rule possess even fewer elements of stability and self-government than those states. In Serbia and Roumania the populations are homogeneous in language and religion. In Bosnia and the other Turkish provinces, besides the large mixture of Mohammedans, there is a serious division amongst the Christians themselves, while the hatred and jealousy between Greeks and Catholics are scarcely less violent than between Christians and Mussulmans. Bosnia, Albania, Bulgaria, and Roumelia, left to themselves, would soon present a scene of anarchy and confusion which would compel

European interference, and probably result in their annexation to some European state.

But could it be possible to form one strong, independent, homogeneous state out of the Slavonian Christian populations of Turkey in Europe, or a confederation of states with a republican form of government? It must be remembered that any such attempt would be resisted by Russia, even to the extent of war. Whether Russia meditates the actual annexation of these provinces or not, one thing is perfectly clear,—that she will never allow, as long as she has the power to prevent it, the establishment of a powerful Slavonian kingdom in the South of Europe, with Constantinople for its capital. Such a state, with a popular government and free institutions, would be far too formidable a rival. The Emperor Nicholas expressed the national Muscovite sentiment when, in discussing with Sir Hamilton Seymour the various combinations which were possible in the event of the dissolution of the Ottoman empire, he declared that Russia would never tolerate, as long as she had a man or a musket left, the reconstruction of a Byzantine empire, that is, of an empire composed of the Slavonian populations of Turkey, or such an extension of Greece as would render her a powerful state. Nor would she, he added, permit Turkey to be broken up into little republics, asylums for the revolutionists of Europe.

Nor would Austria view with any favour such a settlement of the Eastern question. She, too, has Slavonian populations which might desire to join a great Slavonian kingdom, or republic, and form part of the Slavonian nationality. She would probably, therefore, join Russia in preventing the formation of any such rival state. Consequently, what with incapacity for government, internal weakness, and the jealousy and hostility of powerful neighbours, any Christian state that could be formed out of the Slavonian populations of Turkey would only be a source of danger to Europe, and its formation would probably lead sooner or later to war, or to the aggrandisement of Russia, and the realisation of her designs upon Constantinople. The utmost that could be hoped for would be the formation of several small states, each under a different ruler, native or foreign, too weak to defend themselves, or to maintain their independence for any length of time, and compelled by the force of circumstances to place themselves under the protection of Russia or Austria. And this sorry result would be accomplished after the shedding of an immense amount of human blood, at the cost of infinite human misery, and through the perpetration of acts of injustice and confiscation for which history could not find a parallel. The Christian nations of Europe would have to give their aid to drive above five millions of human beings out of Europe, and to deprive them of their homes and lands, in order that they might perish from misery and want in Asia, merely because they happened to be born Mohammedans.

It cannot be too often repeated that such is the design of the Greeks, and that such are the prospects held out to the Slavonian populations by Russian and Servian agents, and those who are urging them to rise in insurrection. These agents can point, to confirm their promises, to Servia and Greece, and to many parts of the East where the Christian element has prevailed. Their battle-cry is inextinguishable hatred between the Mohammedan and the Christian.

There are other results which would arise if the Mohammedans of Turkey were treated in this way, and which, although of no small moment, are usually overlooked. It should be remembered that, although there may be some doubts as to the relative proportion of the Christian and Mohammedan populations in Turkey in Europe, there can be no doubt on the subject with regard to the Asiatic provinces of the empire. In them the Mussulmans are in a very large majority. They belong for the most part to fierce and warlike races, easily excited, and little disposed to look with indifference upon the persecution and ill-treatment of their co-religionists in Europe. It is highly probable that, if the schemes of the Russians, Greeks, and Servians were successful, a terrible vengeance would be taken upon the Christians of Asia, and that massacres and bloodshed would be rife in Asia Minor, Syria, and other parts of the Asiatic territories of the Sultan. Would the European Powers look with indifference on this result of their policy, or would they actively interfere in behalf of the Christians of Asia also? Probably they would have quite enough on their hands on this side of the Bosphorus, while Russia would be in a position to take advantage of the horror which such events would excite in Europe, and to carry out her own policy,—a policy hostile to the interests of England.

It cannot be too strongly urged upon English public men that all these plans for Greek and Slavonian nationality are only so many schemes for the profit of Russia, and for the realisation of her ambitious designs.

That the designs of Russia on Turkey are such as we have described them to be, there can be no doubt. Her policy is probably the most unscrupulous that has ever been pursued by a nation claiming to be ranked amongst civilised peoples. Unless there were overwhelming evidence to prove its existence, it might be deemed incredible and impossible. Not daring to avow its determination to destroy the Turkish empire, or to carry on openly, in the face of Europe, its schemes for accomplishing this end, the Russian Government has resolved to weaken Turkey by constantly inciting her Christian populations to insurrection, and by preventing all improvement and substantial reforms. It calculates, justly enough, that if it is allowed to pursue this policy with impunity, either Turkey must sooner or later fall to pieces of herself, or Europe must at last be compelled to connive at her dismemberment. In order to carry out her schemes, Russia has secured the

services of the Greek clergy in Turkey by subsidies, and by affording them protection in their abuses, and has made use of Greece, Servia, and Roumania. By abetting and aiding the Greeks in their attempts to raise the Greek-speaking populations of Thessaly, Epirus, and Crete, she contrives to keep the southern provinces of Turkey in Europe in an unceasing state of agitation and disquiet. Through the Servians, Montenegrins, and Roumanians she is constantly urging the Slavonians to insurrection. Russian agents swarm amongst the Christian populations, inciting them to insurrection against the Turkish rule, and liberally supplying them with money, and even with arms when necessary. Every Russian consulate in Turkey is the centre of a conspiracy against the Turkish Government. The small states, such as Servia and Greece, are encouraged to look to Russia as their protector in their schemes of aggrandisement, and the Slavonian populations are taught to see in her their deliverer from Turkish rule. Any attempt made by the Porte to improve the condition of its Christian subjects is promptly opposed, and usually defeated. If the Turkish authorities aid in the establishment of a Christian school, or endeavour to found one themselves, a Russian consul immediately appears upon the scene, and either by inciting the Greek clergy against it, or by threatening those persons who would avail themselves of it, speedily contrives to have it closed. If the Christian laity is aided by the Porte in an attempt to obtain a reform of the intolerable abuses which exist in the Greek Church, Russia steps in as the protector of the Greek clergy, and compels the Porte to punish those who have ventured to oppose them. If the Turkish Government, on the other hand, supports the Greek clergy in maintaining any of their rights and privileges, Russia appears as the champion of the laity and as the defender of religious freedom. Whenever any changes in the law or in the local administration are attempted by the Porte with the view of bettering the condition of the Christians, every manner of intrigue is put in motion to prevent their success. If the finances of Turkey show any improvement and her revenue a surplus, fresh embarrassments are wilfully created, and insurrections brought about in some part of the empire, that money may be spent and new difficulties may arise. If these intrigues have been carried on too openly and have been exposed in the face of Europe, Russia calmly denies any knowledge of them, and disavows those who have been employed to carry them on. If the Turkish authorities detect Russian agents in the very act, and venture to complain of their proceedings,—as, for instance, in the case of the aid given to the Cretan insurgents,—Russia assumes the imperious line of an injured state, and demands that her accusers and calumniators should suffer signal punishment. The Turkish Government, unable to resist these demands, is compelled to yield, the too zealous public servant is dismissed or suspended, and a warning is thus given to other officials not to interfere with Russian agents.

The results of the policy pursued by Russia are these ; that the Christian populations are kept in a chronic state of discontent and uneasiness, that the hostility between them and their Mohammedan fellow-subjects is nourished and increased, that the authority of the Turkish Government is weakened, and that public opinion is gradually brought to believe that the dominion of the Sultan in Europe cannot be maintained, that it is incompatible with the prosperity and happiness of the Christians, and that any attempt to reconcile the conflicting interests of the different races under Turkish rule must necessarily fail.

The Eastern policy formerly pursued by England, and best known as the "Palmerstonian" policy, is commonly believed to have consisted in some unnatural sympathy for the Turks in their misrule and in their oppression of Christians, in a futile and impolitic attempt to "bolster up the Turkish empire," in hostility to free institutions and national independence in the East, and in a childish and unfounded jealousy and alarm of Russia. It seems strange that it should be necessary to show that this policy has been entirely misrepresented and misunderstood. Lord Palmerston was the last man to encourage oppression and tyranny in any part of the world. He had no sympathy with Turks as against Christians. He had no wish to see fertile provinces lying waste. No one ever denounced more earnestly and more effectively the misgovernment of Turkey and the corruption and bad faith of Turkish ministers and officials. The Christian populations have never had a more sincere friend than they had in him. But whilst he was ready to help the Christians of Turkey, he felt that her non-Christian populations were equally entitled to justice and sympathy.

The Eastern policy of Lord Palmerston, and that of some of the wisest statesmen of this country, was founded upon the following considerations. Turkey in Europe is inhabited by a mixed population of Mohammedans and Christians. It would be neither just, humane, nor politic to sacrifice Christians to Mohammedans, nor Mohammedans to Christians. To "drive the Turks out of Europe," and to confiscate their lands merely because they are Mussulmans, even if it were possible to do so without a great war, would be equally cruel and opposed to all true principles of justice and liberty. If Turkish rule in Europe were destroyed, there is no Christian population sufficiently civilised and prepared for the functions of government to put in its place. The result would be the formation of several small weak states, or of one large one equally weak, whose complete disorganisation would compel Europe to interfere, or would cause them to fall an easy prey to Russia. To play the game of Russia, and to place European Turkey and Constantinople within her grasp, would be dangerous to the liberties and independence of Europe and to the interests of England. The true policy of this country, therefore,

and the one most consistent with justice, liberty, and humanity, and with our own interests, is to give our moral support to the Turkish Government. That Government, with all its vices and shortcomings, is the only one now capable of maintaining order and imposing obedience amongst a variety of populations, made up of a number of different races with antagonistic creeds, which if left to themselves would persecute and massacre each other. At the same time, it should be the object of the European Powers to place Turkey in close and intimate relation with the rest of Europe, and so to bring public opinion to bear upon her, that the intolerant and exclusive spirit which once characterised Turkish rule may gradually give way before the civilisation and knowledge of the age. By these means improvements in the laws, in the administration of justice, in the education of the people, and in the general conduct of affairs, might be gradually introduced, and equal rights and perfect religious toleration might be secured to all races and creeds inhabiting the Turkish empire. In the course of a short time the Turks would see the absolute necessity of associating the Christians with them in the government of the empire. If the various populations of Turkey were only left alone they would of themselves find the means of reconciling their conflicting interests and jealousies of race, and of living in peace and harmony. By thus amalgamating the various elements of Turkey, and by so strengthening the Ottoman empire that it may maintain its integrity and independence, the cause of civilisation and peace would be more surely promoted than by conniving at and hastening its dissolution on the chance of developing the Christian element in the East. For the ultimate good of the Christians themselves, and as the best chance of enabling them to form hereafter a powerful Christian state or states, it is infinitely better to allow them to achieve their own independence, and to fit themselves for the task of government and the enjoyment of free institutions.

A policy founded on these considerations we believe to be just, humane, and liberal, and the one which it is most consistent with the interests of this country to pursue. It is absurd to compare the Christian population of Turkey with the people of Italy and Germany, and to taunt those with inconsistency or bad faith who have advocated national independence and unity in the centre and south of Europe, and at the same time have supported a policy favourable to the maintenance of the Turkish power on the Danube and Bosphorus. There is no analogy between the two cases. Neither in Italy nor Germany were there those vast distinctions of religion and race which exist in Turkey, nor were there several millions of people to expel from their homes and lands. The Austrians were merely encamped in Lombardy, and it may be said that they never possessed a rood of land in their Italian possessions. In Germany unity is merely a question of the expulsion of a few petty princes. Moreover, no one acquainted with

the history and condition of the Christian populations of Turkey would venture to compare them with the Italians or Germans ; that is, to compare races without national traditions, without the rudiments of knowledge, science, or education, without a literature, without ideas or experience of government, with nations which have the most glorious national traditions and literature, which have led the world in thought, science, and art, which have adopted the principles of religious liberty, and which have already shown all the great and noble qualities that fit a people for freedom and independence.

That the policy of Lord Palmerston was eminently calculated to produce the results which he anticipated can be fully proved by a fair and impartial comparison between the present condition of Turkey and her condition half a century, or even twenty-five years, ago. No country in the world probably ever made so great a progress in so short a time, when all the difficulties which surround the Sultan and his Government are taken into consideration. Notwithstanding all the vices and corruption which unquestionably still exist amongst the governing classes, an immense improvement has taken place in the condition of the populations of Turkey, and especially of the Christians, as well as in the material prosperity and wealth of the empire. To convince ourselves of this fact we have only to turn to the reports of our consular agents presented to Parliament. These gentlemen, who are scattered over the empire, and are not always disposed to render even common justice to the Turks, agree in admitting the fact of this progress. The intolerance and the invidious distinctions which once marked the treatment of the Christians by the Moham-medans are fast disappearing, if they have not already ceased to exist. Acts of tyranny and oppression on the part of the Turkish authorities are becoming rarer every day, and in many parts of the empire cannot possibly be committed. Life and property are secure. The laws are more equal and are better administered, although much is still needed in this respect. Christians are being gradually associated with Moham-medans in all branches of local and provincial administration, and even in some of the highest offices of state. The trade of Turkey has developed itself to an unexampled extent, and the revenues show a corresponding increase. The army is effective and well organised. The old proud exclusive spirit of the Turks is dying out, and they are gradually taking their place in the community of nations. The contentment of the Christians is increasing notwithstanding the unceasing efforts of Russia to create disaffection and discontent amongst them. And to complete these vast changes we have seen the Sultan breaking through the most sacred traditions of his race and setting the example of toleration and progress to his people by visiting Europe and mixing freely with the populations of Christendom.

If so much has been accomplished in so short a period, there is good hope for still greater progress in the future. We may reason-



ably look for the speedy disappearance of those barbarous laws and customs, and that intolerant spirit which still divide Mohammedans from Christians. Means will be found to reconcile their several interests and rights without inflicting injustice and wrong upon either. The Turks are as much entitled to justice as the Christians, and whilst we are urging the claims and denouncing the grievances of the latter, we should not forget that the Mohammedans are exposed to precisely the same misgovernment as their Christian fellow-subjects. It appears to us that a truly liberal policy, the one most worthy of a civilised nation, is that which respects the rights of all subjects of Turkey, without reference to race or creed.

But to give Turkey a fair chance of improving her institutions, of bringing her government into harmony with those of other European states, and of doing full justice to her Christian populations, non-interference and non-intervention on the part of the Great Powers, and internal peace and tranquillity, are absolutely essential. So long as Russia can outrage with impunity the law of nations, and can keep the Christian subjects of the Sultan in constant agitation by her intrigues, it is impossible for the Turkish Government to carry out those great reforms which are necessary to the consolidation of the empire.

We are no advocates for "bolstering up the Turkish empire," nor do we desire that this country should lend itself to any such policy. All we ask is that the doctrine of non-intervention which we would enforce with regard to other nations should be extended to Turkey. If she cannot maintain herself, then let her fall. If the Christians are desirous of establishing a national independence, let them achieve it if they are able. But let Turks and Christians be left to settle their own affairs, and let us not be guilty of the gross inconsistency and inhumanity of demanding justice for the Christians whilst we are prepared to inflict the greatest injustice and cruelty upon the Mohammedans. We are convinced that if Europe would only leave the Turks to themselves they would soon find the means of living in harmony and of devising a form of government which would respect and uphold the interests and rights of all classes, races, and creeds.

It would seem that some at least of the European powers have of late shown symptoms of returning to the views of Eastern policy which we have advocated, of uniting with England, and of abandoning the fatal course which they have followed since the Crimean war. These powers have discovered that the policy which they have pursued in Servia, Roumania, and Crete, has only tended to weaken and dismember Turkey for the benefit of Russia, without promoting the true interests of the Christians. France has found that she has lost instead of gained influence in the East since 1856. By constantly acting upon a policy hostile to the Porte, and by thus indirectly encouraging insurrection and disaffection amongst the Christian populations of Turkey, she has only weakened the Ottoman Empire,



added to the risk of prematurely bringing on the Eastern question, and promoted the schemes of aggrandisement entertained by Russia. She has derived no advantage whatever from the course which she has pursued. She has not even added to that showy influence which gratifies her national vanity, nor has she promoted the interests of Roman Catholicism, either in France or in the East. In aiding to establish the union of the Danubian Principalities under the rule of a foreign prince, and in thus bringing about their ultimate separation from Turkey, she has only abetted religious persecution of the most cruel and barbarous kind. She must be somewhat ashamed of her work. Indeed, as we know, she has been compelled by public opinion to address remonstrances to the Roumanian government on account of their infamous conduct towards the Jews, and their audacious attempts to raise an insurrection in Bulgaria. By thus stepping in to prevent the perpetration of these crimes, she has only destroyed the influence she had acquired amongst a certain class in Roumania by giving her assistance to the Republican party in their designs against Turkey and against the landed proprietors of the Principalities. She has encouraged the intrigues of the Servians amongst the Turkish populations, and their schemes of territorial aggrandisement, only to provide Russia with the most apt instruments to carry out designs in Turkey which are both anti-French and anti-Catholic. To counteract the results of her own policy, she is now obliged to threaten the Servian Government, and to oppose the proceedings of that party in Servia which she had made so many sacrifices of principle and good faith to conciliate. So that France has thus contrived by her uncertain and wavering policy to give cause of offence and suspicion to the Porte without satisfying the enemies of Turkey.

Austria, too, has now discovered that, by supporting the Servians and Roumanians in their attempts to establish their independence, and by encouraging their intrigues amongst the Slavonic populations of Turkey, she has only been promoting the designs of Russia at the expense of her own interests and influence in the East. To no European Power are the tranquillity and prosperity of the Ottoman empire of more vital importance than to Austria. For several hundred miles she borders on Turkish provinces. Any agitation amongst the Slavonians of Turkey cannot fail to find an immediate response amongst her own Slave populations. The conterminous peoples of both empires are more or less dependent upon each other for many necessities of life, and for their commerce. As Austria adopts a commercial policy more in accordance with the liberal spirit which now guides her counsels, and encourages instead of checking the intercourse between her own populations and those of the neighbouring Turkish provinces, a trade of great value will be established between them. Dalmatia, with her magnificent harbours and her skilled and hardy mariners, is the natural outlet for the produce of

Bosnia and the western corn-producing districts of Turkey. Hitherto that important part of the Austrian empire has been unaccountably neglected. No roads have united its northern and southern extremities, or connected it with the agricultural districts of Turkey, with which intercourse has been discouraged and impeded by heavy duties and vexatious frontier regulations. Austria under a more enlightened government, and under the pressure which Hungary and Bohemia are bringing to bear upon her, begins, when perhaps too late, to perceive the fault which she has committed in omitting to encourage and conciliate her Slavonian populations, and in allowing Russia to extend her influence amongst them, and amongst the adjacent subjects of the Porte. She is anxious, therefore, to repair her error by joining with England and France in pursuing a wiser policy with regard to Turkey. One of the first symptoms of this change was the proposal which, in conjunction with France, she has recently made to the British Government to present a collective note to the Prince of Serbia reminding him of his engagements to the Porte, and calling upon him to desist from his aggressive and mischievous proceedings amongst the Bosnians and Bulgarians. Although Lord Stanley declined to take part in a joint remonstrance, and addressed a separate note, couched, we understand, in energetic terms, to the Prince, Austria and France did consent to act together, and appear to have brought the Prince to some sense of his duty.

But an important auxiliary to Turkey has recently appeared in the field. It would seem that the leaders of the Polish national party, after the failure of their recent attempt to achieve their independence as a nation by rising in arms against their oppressors, have come to the conclusion that their wisest policy, and the one best calculated to attain their object, is to counteract the schemes of Russia in the East, and to thwart her ambitious project of forming a vast Slavonian empire of which she is to be the head, and which is to swallow up not only the Poles, but all the Slave populations of Austria and Turkey. The best way to defeat these designs is, they believe, to make their fellow Slavonians of those two empires understand that they are merely used by Russia as tools for the promotion of her policy, and that if by her help they could succeed in separating themselves from Austria and Turkey, their inevitable lot would be to share the fate of Poland, and to be reduced to the condition of Russian provinces, and that their real civilisation thus would be retarded, while they would be altogether deprived of the chance of national independence. The employment of a considerable number of Poles by the Turkish Government in the army and in a civil capacity has enabled the Polish leaders to do much in this direction, and already they have succeeded in opening the eyes of many of the most influential Christian communities in European Turkey, and in counteracting the attempts of Russia to excite disaffection and revolt amongst them.

The Turkish Government will do wisely to avail itself of their powerful aid. Austria, in the meanwhile, has perceived the use that can be made of the Polish element to check the intrigues of Russia amongst her own Slavonic populations, and she has taken steps to turn it to good account by entering upon a more just and conciliatory policy towards her Galician subjects. The effect of this change in the relations between the Austrian Government and the Poles is already felt in the Polish provinces of Russia, and its importance is fully proved by the annoyance shown by Russia at the policy now pursued by Austria, and the efforts she is making to counteract it.

The attitude which France and Austria have thus assumed must lead to very important changes in the aspect of the Eastern question, and will tend to afford Turkey an opportunity of strengthening herself and of consolidating her power, by carrying out essential reforms, by setting her finances in order, by placing her army and navy in a more effective condition, and by further conciliating and contenting her Christian populations. If she avails herself wisely and without delay of this opportunity, her fall may not be so near as her enemies would wish the world to believe, or as those who are ignorant of her real condition and of her resources have been led to think.

Fortunately for Turkey, whilst France and Austria have altered their policy towards her, a marked change is taking place in public opinion in this country. The majority of thinking men are coming to the conviction that it is our true policy to encourage the Turkish Government in its efforts to improve the condition of all classes of its subjects, Mohammedans as well as Christians; to prevent, as far as possible, the intervention and interference of other countries in the internal affairs of Turkey, and to aid her in consolidating her strength and in maintaining her own independence and integrity,—in fact, to return, in a great measure, to the policy of Lord Palmerston.

Such a policy, without involving Europe in the risk of war, will tend more than any other to the solution of the Eastern question in the manner most consistent with the true interests of the various populations of different creeds and races which compose the Ottoman Empire. It has often been asserted that the Mohammedans of Turkey are dying out, and that the Christians, by their superior enterprise, industry, and intelligence, are gradually acquiring their lands and the wealth of the country. Whether this be only in part or altogether true, may be a question open to discussion. But if this process of absorption of the Mohammedan population is going on as rapidly as the enemies of Turkey assume, it is unnecessary that they should always be calling upon Europe to aid them in "driving the Turks into Asia;" for the time cannot be far distant when the Christians will of themselves take their proper place, and the Eastern question will thereby solve itself without the necessity of a bloody struggle and European interference or an European war.

## AVICE.

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"On serait tenté de lui dire, Bonjour, Mademoiselle la Bergeronnette."

V. Hugo.

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THOUGH the voice of modern schools  
Has demurred,  
By the dreamy Asian creed  
'Tis averred,  
That the souls of men, released  
From their bodies when deceased,  
Sometimes enter in a beast,—  
Or a bird.

I have watched you long, Avice,—  
Watched you so,  
I have found your secret out;  
And I know  
That the restless ribboned things,  
Where your slope of shoulder springs,  
Are but undeveloped wings  
That will grow.

When you enter in a room,  
It is stirred  
With the wayward, flashing flight  
Of a bird;  
And you speak—and bring with you  
Leaf and sun-ray, bud and blue,  
And the wind-breath and the dew  
At a word.

When you called to me my name,  
Then again  
When I heard your single cry  
In the lane,  
All the sound was as the "sweet"  
Which the birds to birds repeat  
In their thank-song to the heat  
After rain.

When you sang the "Schwalbenlied,"  
                                   'Twas absurd,—  
 But it seemed no human note  
                                   That I heard ;  
 For your strain had all the trills,  
 All the little shakes and stills,  
 Of the over-song that rills  
                                   From a bird.

You have just their eager, quick  
                                   "Airs de tête,"  
 All their flush and fever-heat  
                                   When elate ;  
 Every bird-like nod and beck,  
 And a bird's own curve of neck  
 When she gives a little peck  
                                   To her mate.

When you left me, only now,  
                                   In that furred,  
 Puffed, and feathered Polish dress,  
                                   I was spurred  
 Just to catch you, O my Sweet,  
 By the bodice trim and neat,  
 Just to feel your heart a-beat,  
                                   Like a bird.

Yet, alas ! Love's light you deign  
                                   But to wear  
 As the dew upon your plumes,  
                                   And you care  
 Not a whit for rest or hush ;  
 But the leaves—the lyric gush,  
 And the wing-power, and the rush  
                                   Of the air.

So I dare not woo you, Sweet,  
                                   For a day,  
 Lest I lose you in a flash,  
                                   As I may ;  
 Did I tell you tender things,  
 You would shake your sudden wings ;  
 You would start from him who sings,  
                                   And away.

A. D.

## BALZAC AT HOME.

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It is a question how far a natural desire to know the interior life and personality of men whose genius has made them famous, may be gratified by their survivors without any infringement of a delicate sense of honour. It is not a question, but a certainty, that in some cases curiosity of this nature has been pandered to by a profligate disregard of the most sacred obligations, and that seals have been broken which the scruples of common honesty and decency should have kept inviolate.

Therefore, before we approach any revelations of the dead, we should carefully inquire whether it was with their own sanction that such a source of knowledge was disclosed to us. We should respect a dead man's letter, a dead man's hidden thoughts, a dead man's secret passion or untold infirmity, more than a living man's; because he has passed beyond the possibility of self-defence.

But these considerations concern the interior rather than the exterior of life,—the concealed springs of action, and not such proceedings as are open to the light of day, wherever the sun chances to shine upon them. What coat a man wore, what dressing-gown, what slippers, what attitude he lounged in,—what occupation he loved,—what dinner he preferred,—how he talked,—when and where he wrote,—what was his favourite walk, his favourite flower, or his favourite fruit,—all these things may be told without treachery if they can be told without tedium. A certain dramatic power must belong to the narrator who can excite attention by such small records; the genius of comedy must distinguish a chronicler of this kind, and it is a rare genius, so rare that very few remarkable men have been introduced to us by their friends as they have been seen by them pleasantly taking their ease at home. It is, then, worth our while to give to the English public the substance of the entertainment which M. Léon Gozlan provided for the French in a small volume which he called "*Balzac en Pantoufles*," and which contains lively descriptions of his friend Balzac, the distinguished novelist of France, as he saw him at his own table, in his own bedroom, in his own garden, and in his undress without his coat and in his slippers. This volume is not new to the French, for it was published soon after Balzac's death, but it is less known in England than it deserves to be; for M. Gozlan is a humorous and graceful writer, with skill such as brings to the memorial of a man who has perished the spirit of his

living presence, and even the form of his bodily existence. Balzac's own works, original and exceptional in their introspective power, lead the reader into close mental relations with the writer, and necessarily suggest much speculation as to what the outer ways and habits of such a man may have been; with his vision which saw into the dark; with his probe which pierced the innermost core of the human heart.

His habit of beginning to work at midnight is in harmony with the impression which his writings make upon us. It is fit that his terrible investigations should be made in silence and secrecy, and that his pen should move to its dread office like the knife of the surgeon who deals with forbidden things dragged out of the tomb.

This was the way he operated; he went to bed very early, and slept till midnight, when he rose to write down those painful revelations of human suffering, human iniquity, and human folly which have fascinated mankind because they have laid bare the mysteries of an inner world hitherto known only in obscure glimpses, and exactly analysed flitting thought and unrecognised passion. Balzac would sometimes be so far lost in the contemplations which accompanied his work that he would discover himself, with a shock of surprise, at early dawn in the woods of Versailles or on the Place du Carrousel in his dressing-gown and slippers, without his hat; having wandered out in the agitation of composition, churning his thoughts by rapid movement. An unexpected highwayman darting out of the woods, or a lunatic escaped from the asylum, would hardly have startled him more than this apparition of himself; and first he would pause to wonder at his own position, and then he would hastily climb on to the roof of a Versailles omnibus and jog on steadily for awhile, and forget to pay; a forgetfulness which was not wholly unaccountable, for he rarely had a penny in his pocket. This proceeding excited no astonishment; for all the drivers knew him and humoured him, and they suffered the account to run on and the debt to accumulate ad infinitum.

One of the strangest of his bat-like flittings was that which brought him at 2 A.M., one winter morning, to the door of his friend Laurent Jan, Rue de Navarin, Paris. Laurent Jan, not expecting visitors at such an hour, was fast asleep; and Balzac rang repeatedly and vehemently, till at last an angry porter was roused from his dreams.

"What do you want? Who's there? What's it all about? Who are you, in the devil's name?" Amidst a storm of questions of this nature, and of bitter imprecations, Balzac reached his friend's sleeping-room. Laurent Jan, awakened by the clamour, startled by the apparition, sat bolt upright in his bed and rubbed his eyes in great agitation while he asked,—

"Is that really you, Balzac?"

"Yes, it is!" replied Balzac. "Get up at once; we are going a journey."

"A journey?"

"Yes,—a journey. . . . But get up directly, and I will tell you all about it."

"No, no,—before I get up, I must know where I am going."

"Well,—make yourself happy, I beg. We are about to start immediately on a visit to the Great Mogul."

"Are you mad?"

"No,—we are going to get rich; wonderfully rich; immensely rich; as rich as the Great Mogul's whole empire."

"Come, come; before I pack my things," said Laurent Jan,—but he spoke timidly in fear of an explosion from Balzac,—"I should like to know more fully what we have to do with this Great Mogul."

"Make haste!" cried Balzac impatiently; "while you are hesitating on the brink of your bed, we are losing millions of money; time will not stay for us, and we have to fetch Léon Gozlan."

"Indeed! is Gozlan going too?"

"Yes: I wish him to have a share in the treasures which await us."

Laurent Jan got up; resigned himself to the prospect of becoming a millionaire; dressed himself, and grumbled; and at last, when he was ready, said to Balzac, who was stamping with impatience,—

"I must say that I should like to know what we are to do with the Mogul, since I have consented to visit him in your company."

Balzac then drew Laurent Jan with an air of mystery towards the lamp, and said, when its light shone full upon them, "Look at this ring."

"I see it quite well, and I should think it is worth fourpence or thereabouts."

"Fourpence! Nonsense,—look again."

"Well, sixpence, then; and now let us have done with it."

"Have done with it? No!—not quite. I beg to inform you that this ring was presented to me at Vienna by the famous historian, M. de Hammer, when I was last in Germany."

"Well?"

"Well; as he gave it to me, M. de Hammer smiled and said, 'One day you will know the importance of this small token.' I took the ring, attaching little importance to this observation, and I believed that I merely possessed one of those small green pebbles which are everywhere so common."

"What else?"

"What else? Why, in the first place, there are letters engraved upon this stone . . . these letters;—but no, I will not anticipate the glorious surprise which came upon me yesterday, and which has brought me breathless to you to-night. You must know then that yesterday, at the Neapolitan ambassador's party, I bethought me of



making inquiries of the Turkish ambassador concerning the meaning of these letters on my ring. I showed him the ring, and he no sooner set eyes upon it than he uttered a cry which shook the whole assembly. 'This ring,' said he, bowing down to the ground while he spoke, 'belonged to the Prophet; it has been worn by the Prophet, and the Prophet's name is engraved upon it. The English stole it from the Great Mogul about a hundred years ago, and afterwards sold it to a German prince.' Here I interrupted him, 'It was presented to me at Vienna by M. de Hammer.' 'Go at once,' said the ambassador, 'lose no time in introducing yourself to the Great Mogul; for he has offered barrels of gold and diamonds to whoever will restore to him the Prophet's ring; and you will come back with unheard-of wealth.' You may fancy my state; just imagine how high I jumped. And now you know, Laurent Jan, why I have come to fetch you. Lose no time; the barrels are waiting for us!"

"And this is what you have called me up for in the middle of the night?" replied Jan; and then, to the unspeakable rage of Balzac, he reiterated his conviction that the ring was not worth more than fourpence.

Balzac's fury when it was once roused knew no bounds; and he thundered out anathemas and roared like a lion; but at last, exhausted by the violence of his own passion, rent in pieces by the storm he had himself lashed up, he laid himself down upon his friend's carpet and slept till the next day, dreaming of the Mogul's treasures. After that the subject was quietly dropped, and from that time forth the ring was seldom to be seen on Balzac's finger.

Such an extraordinary delusion, whether it was wholly self-evolved or whether it was the result of the Turkish ambassador's jocosity, would seem to us hardly compatible with Balzac's sanity, if we did not know by personal observation that the most brilliant intellect, feeding itself on thought in solitude, will become subject to the dominion of fancies which are incomprehensible to a sound understanding;—vagaries, whims, delusions, which alter their characters with the changing moods of the lonely man,—sometimes presenting to him visions of power and glory within his easy grasp,—sometimes with the idea of bitter unendurable human wrong, robbing him of the fruits of the divine gift, and forcing him to curse his fellow-men. The truth is that the keenest intellect suffers the most from want of friction with the outer world. When Balzac was working for the public, his imagination was checked by the notion of the reader's presence, and by a necessary reference to his probable opinion; so that, though he wrote in darkness and silence, he was conscious of the world he wrote for; and besides, as an artist, his ideas were then limited to the proper confines of his art, and to the necessity of verisimilitude in his representations of life. But his imagination, when speculating on personal matters, knew of no restraints or limits.

This may account for some apparent discrepancies between the realistic author and the fanciful dreamer who existed side by side in the person of this singular man, and belonged, however wide apart they may seem, to one distinct individuality. That his favourite vision should be a miraculous treasure of wealth was not surprising; for the purchase of a house and land, which he made with his usual indiscretion, pressed hard upon his pecuniary resources, and became, also, the subject of many small vexatious lawsuits. This house, which he called "*Les Jardies*," was known far and wide for its architectural absurdities, and for its very uncomfortable position on a steep declivity, where it stood in a sliding attitude, threatening an immediate descent upon the road below it, which leads from *Sèvres* to *Ville d'Avray*. As Balzac's favourite recreation was building, his house was for ever being built; the happiest of conditions for the builder, and the most miserable for his friends; a state of gradual advancement and uncertain progress, in which there is always a hope to be developed, an expectation to be realised, a desire to be accomplished, and a small seed to bring forth an enormous fruit. His ideas were vast, and his means of carrying them out were narrow, so that his friends had to draw largely on their imagination for what they were intended to see. They had to look at rough, bare plaster walls, and to suppose them richly decorated; the master-hand having inscribed on them all their potentialities. They saw written directions out of which their fancy was to construct the furniture of the room;—"there a splendid mirror;" "here first-rate wood-carving;" "here an antique frieze;" "here a superb book-case," &c.; out of such phrases the imagination was to supply comfort and beauty. They satisfied the mind of the author; and his guests, if they were not very luxuriantly lodged, were at any rate well entertained. This house was of all Balzac's works the most romantic; the only one, perhaps, which could not be accused of a painful realism; and, as a proof of his eccentricities, it was a comfort to the commonplace, who knew that he was a genius, and who felt that it struck a balance in their favour. Indeed, to this large class of society Balzac was altogether a satisfactory phenomenon. His intellectual superiority did not cast them at his feet; for he was ridiculous, and they could laugh at him.

In spite of his plain features and strange, slovenly costume, Balzac was a favourite with Parisian ladies; because, though he exhibited them in his novels as vicious, frivolous, and cold-hearted, he was a great extoller of their personal beauty; and he allowed them the gift of beauty not only in the days of sunny youth, but gave them a further grant in their more mature years.

He postponed to the furthest possible date the death of loveliness; and so the coquettish matron, full of days, poring over his pages, saw her hours of enchantment prolonged further than she had ventured

to hope, and beheld an empire created for her more extended and more solid than her most sanguine mood had ever dared to shape.

There is not in the whole range of Balzac's comments on humanity any one satire so bitter upon the fair and feeble sex whose secret vanities he delighted to explore; there is not in the whole catalogue of his denunciations any one clause so cruel, so savage, so damaging as this fact,—that women were found to worship the writer who exhibited in the strongest colours their physical beauty and their moral depravity. Unwittingly, in this way they proved his sum for him,—and it was the sum of their own iniquity.

Whatever their follies, however, and whatever their misdemeanours, Balzac had a great relish for their admiration, and a pretty woman's smile was worth all the laudation of all the critics in his eyes,—his eyes in that case governing his thoughts. But, though his success in that direction was very dear to him,—though he was extolled on all sides,—and though, as a novelist, he was the fashion,—he had a personal grievance. He was not a dramatist; and he saw in the large proportions of his contemporary Victor Hugo's genius, in the comprehensiveness of his grasp, in the fulness of his imagination, in the vigour and vastness of his conceptions, a power of such magnitude as seemed to reduce his own to a contracted span. Hugo was a novelist, a poet, and a successful dramatist; and every play that he produced caused a strange fermentation and irritation in the mind of his rival. Balzac, on each of these occasions, wondered and wondered, and struggled vainly after plots and situations. He was perplexed; how was it that such a man as himself, who could see so deeply into the intricacies of human passion,—into the most remote and winding ways of the human heart, should fail when he tried to write a play? He resented his deficiency, and could not find its explanation; yet, to any one who has read his novels, it is evident that their peculiar force depends upon qualities essentially opposed to those which are required for the construction of a drama. He makes his impressions by careful detail and elaborate description. His characters explain themselves by the help of minute circumstance. His story unfolds itself gradually, and in his satire his own presence is always felt. Every one of his works is stamped with the special image of his features, and his view of life is one-sided. The large range of the dramatist, the various passions, the exaltation of the poetic mood, the concentration of plot, the construction of situations which at once reveal a character or unravel a tissue of events,—all these things, which constitute the power of a play-writer, were wholly alien from the mind of Balzac. But he would not believe that any gift could be denied to him, and while the loud applause of Hugo's audiences rang in his ear, he resolved that he too would be the author of a drama. And, so resolved, he foresaw, according to his wont, a mine of inexhaustible wealth as the necessary result of his determination.

"Listen," he said, "I have a great idea,—no less sound than dazzling. I have in my head a piece full of scenic effects for the *Porte St. Martin*. *Frederick le Maitre* promises to play for me. With *Le Maitre* to help us, don't doubt it, we shall have at least 150 representations, averaging 5,000 francs apiece, and these will bring into our treasury 750,000 francs. Now, just calculate, with twelve per cent. as the rights of the author, I shall receive more than 90,000 francs. Add to that a sale of 10,000 copies of the play, at three francs apiece, and we get a further sum of 30,000 francs."

In this way Balzac shaped for himself certain profits out of uncertain projects, and was the undisputed master of theoretical millions. In order to facilitate the fulfilment of his great enterprise, he resolved to engage an assistant dramatist,—a proceeding not unusual in France, where division of labour is a vital principle in all kinds of art. It is often very successful; for there are some men who are ingenious in devising plots, others who are brilliant in dialogue, and a union of their faculties may produce a satisfactory whole, while each might use these qualities separately with an inadequate result. But however wise Balzac might be in having recourse to some partner in his undertaking, he showed a great deficiency of wisdom in the instrument he selected for this purpose.

The choice fell on a poor, pale, emaciated youth, named Lassailly,—dead since, but not dead of this effort, though very much tried by it. He was a dreamy youth, wholly unable to cope with the temper of Balzac, or to fulfil any of the conditions of his engagement. However, he accepted the post of literary assistant, and undertook, in return for board and lodging and a comfortable home, to provide Balzac with a plot, a situation, or a scene, whenever he should be called upon to do so. Balzac's part of the agreement was perfectly carried out, and the thin youth was so well taken care of, so amply fed, and so luxuriously treated, that his figure began to acquire new proportions; but what he gained by wholesome nourishment he lost by unwholesome affliction. He went through much anguish in his futile efforts. Balzac, as we have said, was a bat-like man, and took his flights at midnight. It was at two o'clock in the morning that he rang vehemently for Lassailly, and requested him to enter upon his functions.

Poor Lassailly! Timidly and hurriedly he rose, partly dressed himself, and then, like the man John in the nursery rhyme, with "one stocking off, and one stocking on," he crept through the long, dreary, silent passages which separated his room from that of Balzac. He was a strange-looking figure, with his cotton night-cap drawn down over his ears, his tremulous taper in his hand, and his face of complete consternation,—for he had the gift of exhibiting consternation in the highest degree. He found Balzac pale with watching, troubled with thought, jaundiced by the lamp-light which fell upon

his cheeks and brow,—not in any way resembling the Balzac of the drawing-room or the Boulevards. He looked formidable now, and Lassailly trembled as a slave questioned by a savage taskmaster, when the novelist demanded of him,—“What have you done for me, Lassailly? What do you suggest? What is your idea?”

The wretched youth lifted his cotton night-cap, rubbed his eyes, trying to disperse the impression of his dreams, and stammered out,—“Ah, well! certainly something ought to be contrived,—something ought to be thought of——”

“Well! and have you invented this something? Come, make haste! The manager wrote to me this very afternoon. I have seen Frederick le Maitre.”

“Indeed! You have seen Frederick le Maitre?”

“Yes, and his whole heart is in our play. He is hungry, he is thirsty, for a drama which is to arouse all Paris. But where is this rousing drama? What is it to be?”

“Ah! What is it to be?” repeated Lassailly.

“Have you got hold of the drama, Lassailly?”

“Not altogether; but——”

“You have partly made it out, then?”

“Yes;—no.”

“Speak; I am all attention.”

“I should prefer,” muttered Lassailly, “that you should first let me know your ideas on the subject. We might then blend our thoughts together, and then——”

“Lassailly, you are asleep.”

“Oh dear, no.”

“Oh dear, yes; I tell you, you are asleep. You have gone to sleep in that erect posture. I see it. Your heavy eyelids are closing.”

“No,—no, indeed,—I assure you.”

“You are yawning.”

“It is only the cold; it——”

“Go to bed again, Lassailly; and in an hour's time we will see whether the muse can do something better for you.”

Lassailly resumed his flickering taper, and, shuffling along in his slippers, reached his room like a tortured ghost, and threw himself upon his bed again for a short interval of rest. He slept; but at the end of an hour he was startled out of his short uneasy slumber by repeated peals of Balzac's bell. Bare-footed now, and with nothing on but his knitted drawers, Lassailly answered the summons, concealing his actual distress under an appearance of extraordinary eagerness. The old dialogue was renewed between the author and his assistant,—Balzac wide awake as a roaring lion, and Lassailly as torpid as a dormouse. Six times in the course of that night the unhappy Lassailly was called up from his warm bed to be put to the

question; six times he found himself unable to reply. It was evident that this state of things could not go on; and when M. Gozlan, some days afterwards, met Lassailly at the corner of the Rue Lafitte, he was looking more miserable, more haggard than usual, having parted from his employer for ever. His eyes, which were of a watery habit, were now cast up to heaven full of tears. And M. Gozlan, sympathising with his evident suffering, observed to him, that it was a pity he had quitted Balzac, for he seemed to be well off at the Jardies.

"Well off!" cried Lassailly. "Well off, indeed! What a delicious existence! Roast meat every day; vegetables twice a day; profuse desserts; and oh! what coffee!"

"Then why have you given it up?"

"Why? Do you ask why? Who could bear such a life. Six,—eight times called up in one night; and that is not all. Ordered, with a pistol held at my throat, to invent a drama which should set all Paris astir. Human endurance could not stand it. Mine, already tried by many vicissitudes and contending passions, was wholly exhausted."

Lassailly wept, and said, "Never, never, will I set foot again on the threshold of the Jardies."

He kept his word; and he not only avoided the Jardies from that day, but he never again heard the name of Balzac without a shudder.

The failure of this experiment did not diminish the ardour of Balzac's hopes. He sought the help of other friends, and the result of his efforts was the production of "*Vautrin*," at the Porte St. Martin, with Frederick Le Maitre playing the principal part. Although the genius of the novelist was, as we have before said, essentially undramatic, the drama, with such powerful support as that of Le Maitre, might have been carried through but for the pyramidal form of wig which he unaccountably and unfortunately chose to wear. This shape of wig was a personal characteristic of the reigning king. It was supposed to be typical of the monarchy, and the caricature of it was accepted as an insult to Louis Philippe, which was felt the more acutely because his eldest son, the Duke of Orleans, was present in the house.

Loud disapprobation saluted the favourite actor's first entrance, and accompanied him throughout the performance; and the next day a formal prohibition of any further representation of the piece was forwarded by the government to the manager. Balzac's friends looked upon this defeat as a cruel freak of destiny, but it probably spared his vanity much suffering. The author was not inculpated; the whole failure was attributed to the absurdity of Le Maitre's head-dress, but in truth the drama was too monotonous in its criminalities to excite strong interest, and was too strongly flavoured with the aroma of the police-court. Balzac's peculiar analytical power served no stage purpose, and his accurate knowledge and minute description

were perhaps rather obstacles than aids. The stage has a rapid life of its own; concentration is its law; its developments are sudden; it cannot recognise the slowness of a chancery suit, nor follow all the niceties of a legal document. Its justice is poetical, and there is no such justice in the actual progress of human events. It rather complies with our aspirations than with our experience; and in this fact lies at once its strength and its weakness. Successfully to follow two vocations so distinct as those of the novel and the play-writer, a man's genius must take a very wide range. The novels of such a writer must be poetical, of the romantic school; or his play must be of the tea-cup small-comedy style.

The novelists who have produced good dramas are easily numbered,—Monk Lewis, Mrs. Inchbald, Lord Lytton, in England; Victor Hugo, Alexandre Dumas, and Octave Feuillet, in France; and Goethe, in Germany. It is easier for a great dramatist to write a great novel than for an habitual novelist to create a drama, because the qualities required for a first-rate play are of a more varied character than those which will suffice for the construction of a first-rate novel. It would have been impossible to Miss Austen to write an effective drama, and it was almost as difficult for Balzac, though in his intensity of passion he had an element of tragic power, such as might at least have borne fruit in one great scene.

Knowing how little Balzac was ever doubtful of himself,—whatever the critics might say,—it was natural that his friends should expect to see him utterly bewildered and dismayed by the failure of "*Vantrín*;" but he was found the next day full of new speculations, looking forward, not backward, and expecting the realisation of the wildest of dreams.

The instant that Gozlan set foot in his room he called upon him to look out at window and carefully to examine the strip of land which bordered his property; and then he informed him that he intended to establish there, in the course of a few days, a large dairy, which was to supply an abundance of rich milk to the whole neighbourhood, now deprived of this important article of food by the immense consumption of Versailles and Paris. He saw before him from this source alone an annual profit of three thousand francs. And when that was done, an extraordinary growth of vegetables on another patch of land was to yield another three thousand; while a small square piece of dry gravelly soil was to produce annually twelve thousand francs of net profit by the cultivation of vines; so that altogether he might, he thought, reasonably expect an augmentation of income amounting to the sum of eighteen thousand francs. Under these circumstances, said he, what can it matter to me that "*Vautrin*" is prohibited? Any grave argument would have been misplaced in replying to such insane theories as these, and Balzac's friends contented themselves with a few light jests on the subject, or maintained



an absolute silence, leaving it to himself to discover the absurdity of his notions either by quiet meditation or by the experience of failure. His temper would not brook any immediate opposition, and so he sat in that white monkish dress, with cowl and girdle, which he loved to wear when he was quite at his ease, like Rogero, in Mr. Canning's play, "angling for impossibilities." Why Balzac preferred a monk's dress to any other form of attire nobody ever discovered. Perhaps he thought it specially picturesque, or peculiarly suited to his secluded way of life. But whatever his idea was upon this head, he never explained it to society. But he wore his favourite costume whenever he could; and herein he was wise, for persistence silences opposition better than argument.

One of the most remarkable events at the Jardies was a visit from Victor Hugo, whose distinction was at once a subject of feverish admiration and jealous apprehension to Balzac. The admiration, however, was stronger than the fear, and it was rather chance than intention which kept the two men habitually apart. The announcement of the poet's intended visit threw Balzac into a state of extraordinary elation, and all the morning he paced his room with agitated steps. Then he wandered into his garden; then back again into his room, uneasy, unsettled, expectant, till at last Victor Hugo's massive figure was seen toiling up the steep of the Jardies, down which the wall separating Balzac's garden from a neighbour's had tumbled three times, smashing a considerable property in vegetables each time it fell. Up the same steep Le Maitre had proceeded, losing all the advantage of his theatrical demeanour through the difficulty of the ascent; for he had to lay down a large stone at every step to enable him to maintain his footing. Lassailly had trembled on the same declivity; and Balzac himself had slid half-way down as he attempted to sit under the shade of his one tree,—a walnut-tree which he had bought at a high price, expecting to realise some enormous profits by its possession. Victor Hugo, however, arrived without accident, and the meeting was full of interest.

The conversation was flowing and various. An extraordinary eloquence of speech distinguishes the author of the "*Misérables*." He does not require the medium of ink and paper to be poetical: his large grasp of subjects, his forcible and abundant imagery, the intensity of his thought, the volcanic energy of his genius, are equally recognised whether he talks or writes. The most insensible are roused by his presence, and Balzac's mind glowed at the contact, and presently burst out in fiery ebullitions.

Victor Hugo spoke of the king's preference for the citizen class, and of his comparative neglect of literature. He talked of the efforts of the Duke of Orleans to compensate for this neglect; of his attempts at literary meetings in his own home, or, as he expressed it, by his own chimney-corner. From this phrase the meetings got the

name of the chimney-corner parties. He told how the king objected to these assemblies as soon as they became popular, and sent for the prince, and observed to him that such evenings were unnecessary; that his father's home was always open to him; and that he was at liberty to introduce any friends he pleased to the chimney-corner of the Tuileries.

Balzac overflowed in eloquent indignation. He was devouring a large pear at the moment with eager gluttony, for he was a vegetarian who ate nothing but fruit and bread, and who had a hearty appetite; into this pear he dug his teeth deep down, sputtering and scattering the juicy mellowness he loved,—boiling and bubbling, stammering and stuttering, before his rage could find its full expression. Then came what might well be called a grand philippic, beginning with these words, "Miserable wretches! stupid, ignorant, idiotic kings! Are they not aware, then, that without our help none would know what they were, whence they came, whither they went, how they reigned, how they lived, what they did; that without us they would be nothing,—nothing but nothingness? What of all the monuments in bronze, in stone, in marble, with which they overwhelm the land in order to keep their memory alive? What of all the pictures with which they crowd whole museums to record their victories? What of the medals which they hand about as signals of their glory when they are crowned? What of all this? I say, what of all this? Does it not perish? Does it not end in utter annihilation? Stones tumble down, pictures fade, marble gets stained, and rots, and cracks; granite itself crumbles away,—only our written words remain; we alone can rescue a dynasty from oblivion. We are their glory, their immortality, their posterity. We, and we alone! They owe it to us, to our hands, to our ink, to our pens! Without Virgil, Livy, Ovid, who would distinguish one Augustus from a thousand others of the same name, though he was the nephew of Cæsar, and an emperor himself? Without the little briefless barrister, called Suetonius, not three of the twelve Cæsars whose lives he has condescended to write would be remembered. Without Tacitus the Romans of his period would be confounded with the German barbarians. Without Shakespeare, the reign of Elizabeth would be blotted out of English history. Without Boileau, Racine, Corneille, Pascal, La Bruyère, and Molière, Louis XIV., reduced to his mistresses and his wigs, would be nothing better than a mere brainless beauty, the figure of a handsome man, or a sign-post at an inn attempting to represent the sun. Without our help Louis Philippe I. would have a name more obscure than that of Philippe the restaurateur, Rue de Montorgueil, or than that of Philippe the conjuror, who tosses balls in the air. It will be said, I hope, some day,—yes, I hope it, for the sake of Louis Philippe,—that in the reigns of Victor Hugo, of Lamartine, of Beranger, there lived a king who assumed the title of Louis Philippe I."

As he concluded his peroration, Balzac plunged his teeth into the centre of his fourth pear; in his fury he had rapidly consumed three of an unusual size, and his speech had been interrupted by strange babbings, by succulent sounds, by the shivering of glasses, by extraordinary commotion among the bottles, by the thunder of his fists upon the table.

Victor Hugo maintained an Olympian serenity in the midst of the storm which he had evoked, and when it had somewhat subsided the two men went out to enjoy their coffee on the terrace of the Jardies, and to breathe the sweet air of a sunny day.

It might have been some consolation to Balzac if, in the midst of his impetuous denunciation, he could have been assured that one of the poets whom his fancy crowned was destined actually to control the fierce democracy of Paris which the king was unable to face; and that the name of Lamartine was to be associated with an act of such true heroism as it is seldom the office of history to record; that his genius was to arrest, by an effort of eloquence unparalleled in the annals of human energy, the unreasoning rage of multitudes who pressed on with a great cry for blood and rapine; that his single attitude of resistance was to repel a host of advancing bayonets; that he was to deliver Paris from desolation by the fascination of his poetical inspirations and the force of his perfect courage.

But such an event was not to be foreseen, and it was only left to Balzac to anathematise the follies of monarchy. All this was forgotten, however: kings and empires sunk into insignificance when Victor Hugo discoursed upon his productions on the stage of the Français, upon his conquests over the classical drama, upon the joys of a great night of representation, upon the triumph of a high tragic passion when it found a noble utterance, and upon the large income derived from the rights of a successful dramatic author. Poor Balzac turned giddy with the description, and when he took leave of the poet he was more strongly than ever resolved to become a play-writer.

But it was not to be; only after his death his comedy of "Mercadet" was brought out, and being reconstructed for the stage by a skilful adapter, it had a considerable run both in Paris and London. It is well known to London audiences under the title of the "Game of Speculation," a drama in which the remarkable gifts of Charles Mathews find room for their display.

It seems a pity that the author should not have lived to see the fulfilment of his most ardent hope; yet it may be that the pleasure of an eager pursuit is more stimulating than the winning of the trophy; and that with a man of Balzac's temperament no reality could equal the splendour of his vision. And now we leave him to his last home, not without regret. He was a whimsical, absurd man, a humorist whom it is amusing to follow in his harmless extra-

gances; but it is painful to reflect that his works have done an injury to French literature. It was with no evil intention that he wrought evil; the inquisitive analytical tendency of his mind led him continually into curious investigations, into the examination of disease, distortion, and depravity. He exhibited his discoveries and brought his readers into a close contact and familiarity with vice, from which few minds can reasonably hope to escape with total impunity. There may be sometimes a warning moral attached to these scenes, but the cold and conventional counsel makes less impression than the strange and passionate error. And the mere fact of being brought into customary association with iniquity is damaging to purity of thought.

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## PAUL GOSSLETT'S CONFESSIONS.

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### CONFESSION THE LAST—AS TO LAW.

I do not exactly know why I sit down to make this my last confession. I can scarcely be a guide to any one. I even doubt if I can be a warning, for when a man is as miserably unlucky as I have proved myself, the natural inference is to regard him as the exception to the ordinary lot of mortals,—a craft fated to founder ere it was launched. It's all very well to deny the existence of such a thing as luck. It sounds splendidly wise in the Latin moralist to say, "*Non numen habes fortuna si sit prudentia*," which is the old story of putting the salt on the bird's tail over again, since, I say, we can always assume the "*prudentia*" where there is the "*fortuna*," and in the same way declare that the unlucky man failed because he was deficient in that same gift of foresight.

Few men knew life so thoroughly in every condition, and under every aspect, as the first Napoleon, and he invariably asked, when inquiring into the fitness of a man for a great command, "Is he lucky?" To my own thinking, it would be as truthful to declare that there was no element of luck in whist, as to say there was no such thing as luck in life. Now, all the "*prudentia*" in the world will not give a man four by honours; and though a good player may make a better fight with a bad hand than an indifferent performer, there is that amount of badness occasionally dealt out, that no skill can compensate; and do what he may, he must lose the game.

Now, I am by no means about to set up as a model of prudence, industry, or perseverance; as little can I lay claim to anything like natural ability or cleverness. I am essentially common-place,—one of those men taken "*ex medio acervo*" of humanity, whose best boast is, that they form the staple of the race, and are the majority in all nations.

There is a very pleasant passage in Lockhart's *Life of Scott*. I cannot lay my hand on it, and may spoil it in the attempt to quote, but the purport is, that one day when Lockhart had used the word "*vulgar*" in criticising the manners of some people they had been discussing, Sir Walter rebuked him for the mistaken sense he had ascribed to the expression. *Vulgar*, said he, is only common, and common means general; and what is the general habit and usage of mankind has its base and foundation in a feeling and sentiment that we must not lightly censure. It is, at all events, human.

I wish I could give the text of the passage, for I see how lamentably I have rendered it, but this was the meaning it conveyed to me, and I own I have very often thought over it with comfort and with gratitude.

If the great thinkers,—the men of lofty intellects and high-soaring faculties,—were but to know how, in vindicating the claims of every-day people to respect and regard, in shielding them from the sneers of smart men, and the quips of witty men, they were doing a great and noble work, for which millions of people like myself would bless them, I am certain we should find many more such kindly utterances as that of the great Sir Walter.

I ask pardon for my digression, so selfish as it is, and return to my narrative.

After that famous "fiasco" I made in Ireland, I,—as the cant phrase has it,—got dark for some time. My temper, which at first sustained me under any amount of banter and ridicule, had begun to give way, and I avoided my relations, who certainly never took any peculiar pains to treat me with delicacy, or had the slightest hesitation in making me a butt for very coarse jokes and very contemptible drollery.

I tried a number of things,—that is, I begun them. I begun to read for the law; I begun a novel; I begun to attend divinity lectures; I got a clerkship in a public office, as supernumerary; I was employed as traveller to a house in the wooden-clock trade; I was secretary to an Association for the Protection of Domestic Cats, and wrote the prospectus for the "Cats' Home:" but it's no use entering into details. I failed in all, and to such an extent of notoriety had my ill-fortune now attained, that the very mention of my name in connection with a new project would have sentenced it at once to ruin.

Over and over again have I heard my "friends," when whispering together over some new scheme, mutter, "Of course Paul is to have nothing to do with it," "Take care that Paul Gosslett isn't in it," and such-like intimations, that gave me the sensation of being a sort of moral leper, whose mere presence was a calamity. The sense of being deemed universally an unlucky fellow is one of the most depressing things imaginable,—to feel that your presence is accounted an evil agency,—and that your co-operation foreshadows failure,—goes a considerable way towards accomplishing the prediction announced.

Though my uncle's stereotyped recommendation to become a coal-heaver was not exactly to my taste, I had serious thoughts of buying a sack, and, by a little private practice, discovering whether the profession might not in the end become endurable. I was fairly at my wits'-end for a livelihood, and the depression and misery my presence

occasioned wherever I went reacted on myself, and almost drove me to desperation.

I was actually so afraid of an evil temptation that I gave up my little lodging that I was so fond of, near Putney, and went to live at Hampstead, where there was no water deep enough to drown a rat. I also forewent shaving, that I might banish my razors, and in all respects set myself steadily to meet the accidents of life with as near an approach to jollity as I could muster.

The simple pleasures of nature,—the enjoyment of the fields and the wild flowers,—the calm contemplation of the rising or setting sun,—the varied forms of insect life,—the many-tinted lichens, the ferns,—the mosses that clothe the banks of shady alleys,—the limpid pools, starred and broken by the dragon-fly, so full of their own especial charm for the weary voluptuary sick of pampered pleasures and exotic luxuries, do not appeal to the senses of the poor man with that wonderful force of contrast which gives them all their excellence. I have seen an alderman express himself in ecstasies over a roast potatoe, which certainly would not have called forth the same show of appreciation from an Irish peasant. We like what awakens a new sensation in us; what withdraws us even in imagination from the routine of our daily lives. There is a great self-esteem gratified when we say, how simple we can be,—how happy in humility,—how easily satisfied, and how little dependant on mere luxury or wealth.

The postman who passed my window every morning had long ceased to be an object of interest or anxiety to me; for others he brought tidings, good or ill as it might be, but to me, forgotten and ignored of the world, no news ever came; when one day, to my intense surprise, at first to my perfect incredulity, I saw him draw forth a letter, and make a sign to me to come down and take it. Yes, there it was, "Paul Gosslett, Esq., The Flaggers, Putney," with "Try Sandpit Cottages, Hampstead," in another hand, in the corner. It was from my aunt, and run thus:—

"The Briars, Rochester.

"DEAR PAUL,

"I am rejoiced to say, there is a good chance of a situation for you with handsome pay, and most agreeable duty. You are to come down here at once, and see your uncle, but on no account let it be known that I have mentioned to you the prospect of employment.

"Your affectionate aunt,

"JANE MORSE."

I took the morning train, and arrived at Rochester by nine o'clock, remembering, not without pain, my last experiences of my uncle's hospitality. I breakfasted at the inn, and only arrived at the house when he had finished his morning meal, and was smoking his pipe in the garden.



"What wind blows you down here, lad?" cried he. "Where are you bound for now?"

"You forget, my dear," said my aunt, "you told me the other evening, you would be glad to see Paul."

"Humph!" said he with a grunt. "I've been a thinking over it since, and I suspect it wouldn't do. He'd be making a mess of it, the way he does of everything; that blessed luck of his never leaves him, eh?"

Seeing that this was meant as an interrogation, I replied faintly: "You're quite right, uncle. If I am to depend on my good fortune, it will be a bad look-out for me."

"Not that I value what is called luck a rush," cried he with energy. "I have had luck, but I had energy, industry, thrift, and perseverance. If I had waited for luck, I'd have lived pretty much like yourself, and I don't know anything to be very proud of in that, eh?"

"I am certainly not proud of my position, sir."

"I don't understand what you mean by your position; but I know I'd have been a coal-heaver rather than live on my relations. I'd have sold sulphur-matches, I'd have been a porter!"

"Well, sir, I suppose I may come to something of that kind yet; a little more of the courteous language I am now listening to will make the step less difficult."

"Eh?—What! I don't comprehend. Do you mean anything offensive?"

"No, dear, he does not," broke in my aunt, "he only says, he'd do anything rather than be a burden to his family, and I'm sure he would; he seems very sorry about all the trouble he has cost them."

My uncle smoked on for several minutes without a word; at last, he came to the end of his pipe, and having emptied the ashes, and gazed ruefully at the bowl, he said: "There's no more in the fellow than in that pipe! Not a bit. I say," cried he aloud, and turning to me, "you've had to my own knowledge as good as a dozen chances, and you've never succeeded in one of them."

"It's all true," said I sorrowfully.

"Owing to luck, of course," said he scornfully; "luck makes a man lazy, keeps him in bed when he ought to be up and at work; luck makes him idle, and gets him plucked for his examinations. I tell you this, sir: I'd rather a man would give me a fillip on the nose than talk to me about luck. If there's a word in the language I detest and hate, it is luck."

"I'm not in love with it myself, sir," said I, trying to smile.

"Did you ever hear of luck mending a man's shoes, or paying his washerwoman? Did luck ever buy a beef-steak, eh?"

"That might admit of discussion."

"Then let me have no discussion. I like work, and I dislike wrangling. Listen to me, and mend now, sir. I want an honest, sober, fixed determination;—no caprice, no passing fancy. Do you

believe you are capable of turning over a new leaf, and sitting down steadily to the business of life, like a patient, industrious, respectable man who desires to earn his own bread, and not live on the earnings of others?"

"I hope so."

"Don't tell me of hope, sir. Say you will or you will not."

"I will," said I resolutely.

"You will work hard, rise early, live frugally, give up dreaming about this, that, or the other chance, and set to like a fellow that wants to do his own work with his own hands?"

"I promise it all."

My uncle was neither an agreeable nor a very clear exponent of his views, and I shall save my reader and myself some time and unpleasantness if I reduce the statement he made to me to a few words. A company had been formed to start an hydropathic establishment on a small river, a tributary of the Rhine,—the Lahn. They had acquired at a very cheap rate of purchase an old feudal castle and its surrounding grounds, and had converted the building into a most complete and commodious residence, and the part which bordered the river into a beautiful pleasure-ground. The tinted drawings which represented various views of the castle and the terraced gardens, were something little short of fairyland in captivity. Nor was the pictorial effect lessened by the fact that figures on horseback and on foot, disporting in boats, or driving in carriages, gave a life and movement to the scene, and imparted to it the animation and enjoyment of actual existence. The place of director was vacant, and I was to be appointed to it. My salary was to be three hundred a year, but my table, my horses, my servants,—in fact, all my household, were to be maintained for me on a liberal scale; and my duties were to be pretty much what I pleased to make them. My small smattering of two or three languages,—exalted by my uncle into the reputation of a polyglot,—had recommended me to the "Direction;" and as my chief function was to entertain a certain number of people twice or thrice a week at dinner, and suggest amusements to fill up their time, it was believed that my faculties were up to the level of such small requirements.

From the doctor down to the humblest menial all were to be under my sway; and as the establishment numbered above a hundred officials, the command was extensive, if not very dignified. I will own frankly, I was out of myself with joy at the prospect; nor could all the lowering suggestions of my uncle, and the vulgar cautions he instilled, prevent my feeling delighted with my good fortune. I need not say what resolves I made; what oaths I registered in my own heart to be a good and faithful steward, and while enjoying to the full the happiness of my fortunate existence, to neglect no item of the interests confided to me.

All that I had imagined or dreamed of the place itself was as nothing to the reality ; nor shall I ever forget the sense of overwhelming delight in which I stood on the crest of the hill that looked down over the wooded glen and winding river ; the deep-bosomed woods, the wandering paths of lawn or of moss, the gently-flowing stream in which the castle, with its tall towers, was tremblingly reflected, seemed to me like a princely possession, and for once I thought that Paul Gosslett had become the favourite child of fortune, and asked myself what had I done to deserve such luck as this ?

If habit and daily use deaden the pangs of suffering, and enable us to bear with more of patience the sorrows of adverse fortune, they, on the other hand, serve to dull the generous warmth of that gratitude we first feel for benefits, and render us comparatively indifferent to enjoyments which, when first tasted, seemed the very ecstasy of bliss. I am sorry to make this confession ; sorry to admit that after some months at "Lahneck," I was, although very happy and satisfied, by no means so much struck by the beauty of the place and the loveliness of the scenery as on my first arrival, and listened to the raptures of the new comers with a sort of compassionate astonishment. Not but I was proud of the pretentious edifice, proud of its lofty towers and battlemented terraces, its immense proportion, and splendid extent. It was, besides, a complete success as an enterprise. We were always full ; applications for rooms poured in incessantly, and when persons vacated their quarters, any change of mind made restitution impossible. I believed I liked the despotism I exercised ; it was a small, common-place sort of sovereignty over bath-men and kitchen-folk, it is true ; but in the extent of my command I discovered a kind of dignity, and in the implicit obedience and deference, I felt something like princely sway.

As the host, too, I received a very flattering amount of homage ; foreigners always yield a willing respect to anything in authority, and my own countrymen soon caught up the habit, as though it implied a knowledge of life and the world. I had not the slightest suspicion that my general manners or bearing were becoming affected by these deferences, till I accidentally overheard a cockney observe to his wife, "I think he's pompious," a censure that made me very unhappy, and led me to much self-examination and reflection.

Had I really grown what the worthy citizen called "pompious ;" had I become puffed up by prosperity, and over exalted in self-conceit ? If so, it were time to look to this at once.

The directors generally were well pleased with me. Very gratifying testimonials of their approval reached me ; and it was only my uncle's opposition prevented my salary being augmented. "Don't spoil the fellow," he said ; "you'll have him betting on the Derby, or keeping a yacht at Cowes, if you don't look out sharp. I'd rather cut him down a hundred than advance him fifty." This fiat

from my own flesh and blood decided the matter. I sulked on this. I had grown prosperous enough to feel indignant, and I resolved to afford myself the well-to-do luxury of discontent. I was therefore discontented. I professed that to maintain my position,—whatever that meant,—I was obliged to draw upon my own private resources; and I went so far as to intimate to the visitors that if I hadn't been a man of some fortune the place would be my ruin! Of course my hint got bruited about, and people commonly said, "If Gosslett goes, the whole concern will break up. They'll not easily find a man of good private fortune willing to spend his money here, like Gosslett," and such like, till I vow and declare I began to believe my own fiction, and regard it as an indelible fact. If my letter was not on record, I would not now believe the fact, but the document exists, and I have seen it, where I actually threaten to send my resignation if something,—I forget what,—is not speedily conceded to my demands; and it was only on receiving an admonition in the mild vein peculiar to my uncle that I awoke to a sense of my peril, and of what became me.

I know that there are critics who, pronouncing upon this part of my career, will opine that the cockney was right, and that I had really lost my head in my prosperity. I am not disposed to say now that there might not have been some truth in this judgment. Things are generally going on tolerably well with a man's material interests when he has time to be dyspeptic. Doctors assure us that savage nations, amidst whom the wants of life call for daily, hourly efforts, amidst whom all is exigency, activity, and resource, have no dyspepsia. If, then, I had reasoned on my condition,—which I did not,—I should have seen that the world went too smoothly with me, and that, in consequence, my health suffered. Just as the fish swallow stones to aid the digestion, we need the accidents and frictions of life to triturate our moral pabulum, and render it more easily assimilable to our constitutions. With dyspepsia I grew dull, dispirited, and dissatisfied. I ceased to take pleasure in all that formerly had interested me. I neglected duty, and regarded my occupation with dislike. My house dinners, which once I took an especial pride in, seeking not only that the wines and the cookery should be excellent, but that their success as social gatherings should attract notoriety, I now regarded with apathy. I took no pains about either company or cookery, and, in consequence, contrarieties and bad contrasts now prevailed where before all had been in perfect keeping and true artistic shading. My indolence and indifference extended to those beneath me. Where all had once been order, discipline, and propriety, there now grew up carelessness, disorder, and neglect. The complaints of the visitors were incessant. My mornings were passed in reading. I rarely replied to the representations and demands of outraged guests. At last the public press became the channel of these complaints,

and "Publicola," and "One who had Suffered," and a number of similarly named patriots declared that the hydropathic establishment at Lahneck was a delusion and a sham; that it was a camp of confusion and mismanagement, and that though a certain P. Gosslett was the nominal director, yet that visitors of three months' standing averred they had never seen him, and the popular belief was that he was a nervous invalid who accepted a nominal duty in recompense for the benefit of air and climate to himself. "How," wrote one indignant correspondent of the Times, "how the company who instituted this enterprise, and started it on a scale of really great proportions, can find it to their advantage to continue this Mr. Gosslett in a post he so inadequately fills, is matter of daily astonishment to those who have repaired to Lahneck for healthful exercise and amusement, and only found there indifferent attendance and universal inattention."

From the day this appeared I was peppered at every post with letters for the secretary, demanding explanations, reports, returns, what not. The phrase, "the Managing Committee, who are hourly less and less satisfied with Mr. Gosslett's conduct," used to pass through all my dreams.

As for my uncle, his remarks were less measured. One of his epistles, I have it still by me, runs thus: "What do you mean? Are you only an idiot, or is there some deeper rascality under all this misconduct? Before I resigned my place at the Board yesterday, I gave it as my deliberate opinion that a warrant should be issued against you for fraud and malversation, and that I would hail your conviction as the only solace this nefarious concern could afford me. Never dare to address me again. I have forbidden your aunt to utter your name in my presence."

I don't know how it was, but I read this with as much unconcern as though it had been an advertisement about the Sydenham trousers or Glenfield starch. There must be a great dignity in a deranged digestion, for it certainly raises one above all the smaller excitements and conditions of passing events; and when on the same morning that this epistle arrived the steward came to inform me that of three hundred and twenty-four rooms twelve only were occupied, though this was what would be called the height of the season, I blandly remarked, "Let us not be impatient, Mr. Deechworth, they'll come yet." This was in June; by July the twelve diminished to eight. No new arrival came; and as August drew to a close we had three! All September,—and the place was then in full beauty,—the mountains glowing with purple and scarlet heath, the cactus plants on the terrace in blossom, the Virginian acanthus hanging in tangled masses of gorgeous flowers from every tree, the river ever plashing with the leaping trout,—we had not one stranger within our gates. My morning report ran, "Arrivals, none; departures,

none; present in house, none;" and when I put "Paul Gosslett" at the bottom of this, I only wonder why I did not take a header into the Lahn!

As we had at this period eighty-four servants in the house, sixteen horses in the stables, and a staff of thirty-two gardeners and boatmen, not to speak of runners, commissionnaires, and general loungers, I was not amazed when a telegram came in these words: "Close the house, place Deechworth in charge, and come over to London." To this I replied, "Telegram received; compliance most undesirable. Autumn season just opening. Place in full beauty.—P. G."

I will not weary the reader with a mere commercial wrangle;—how the Committee reproached me, and how I rejoined; how they called names, and I hinted at defamation; how they issued an order for my dismissal, and I demurred and demanded due notice. We abused each other all September, and opened October in full cry of mutual attack and defence. By this time, too, we were at law. They applied for a "mandamus" to get rid of me, and my counsel argued that I was without the four seas of the realm, and could not be attacked. They tried to reach me by the statute of frauds, but there was no treaty with Nassau, and I could not be touched. All this contention and quarrelling was like sulphate of quinine to me,—I grew robust and strong under the excitement, and discovered a lightness of heart and a buoyancy of nature, I had believed had long left me for ever; and though they stopped my salary and dishonoured my drafts, I lived on fruit and vegetables, and put the garrison on the same diet, with a liberal allowance of wine, which more than reconciled them to the system.

So matters went on till the ninth of October,—a memorable day to me, which I am not like to forget. It was near sunset, and I sat on the terrace, enjoying the delicious softness of the evening air, and watching the varying tints on the river, as the golden and green light came slanting through the trees and fell upon the water, when I heard the sounds of wheels approaching. There had been a time when such sounds would have awakened no attention, when arrivals poured in incessantly, and the coming or the departing guest evoked nothing beyond the courtesy of a greeting. Now, however, a visitor was an event; and as the post-horses swept round the angle of the wood, and disappeared behind a wing of the castle, I felt a strange sensation through my heart, and a soft voice seemed to say, "Paul, Fate is dealing with you now." I fell into a reverie, however, and soon forgot all about the arrival, till Mr. Deechworth came up with a card in his hand. "Do you know this name, sir,—Mrs. Pultney Dacre? She has only her maid with her, but seems a person of condition." I shook my head in ignorance of the name, and he went on: "She wants rooms on the ground floor, where she can walk out into the garden; and I have thought of No. 4."

"No. 4, Deechworth? that apartment costs sixty francs a day."

"Well, sir, as there are few people now in the house,"—this was an euphemism for none,—*"I have said she might have the rooms for forty."*

"It may be done for one week," said I, "but take care to caution her not to mention it to her friends. We have trouble enough with those tiresome people in London without this. What is she like?"

"A very handsome figure, sir; evidently young; but had a double veil down, and I couldn't see her face."

"How long does she talk of staying?"

"A month, sir. A husband is expected back from India early in November, and she is to wait for him here."

"So," said I thoughtfully, and I am sure I cannot say why, thoughtfully, "she is waiting for her husband's arrival."

"Those young women whose husbands are in India are always pretty; haven't you remarked that, sir?"

"I can't say that I have, Deechworth. These are speculations of a kind that do not occur to me. Let her have No. 4," and with the air of one who dismissed the theme, I waved my hand, and sent him away.

No. 4,—for so the occupant was called,—her name being entirely merged in her number,—never appeared in the grounds, nor showed in any way. The small garden which belonged to her apartment had a separate enclosure of its own, and within this she walked every evening. How she passed her days I know not. I was told that she sang like an angel, but I never heard her. She was, however, a most persistent bather. There was not a douche in the establishment she did not try, and, possibly by way of pastime, she was constantly experimenting on new modes and fashions of bathing.

When the establishment had been crowded and in full work, I had my time so completely occupied that I had little difficulty in keeping my mind estranged from the gossip and tittle-tattle which beset such places; but now, when the roof sheltered a single guest, it was wonderful how, in spite of myself, in spite of all my determination on the subject, I became perversely uneasy to hear about her; to know whether she read or wrote; whether she got letters or answered them; what she thought of the place; whether she was or was not pleased with it; did she praise the camelias? What did she think of the cook? She was evidently "gourmet," and the little dinners she ordered were remarkable for a taste and piquancy that stimulated my curiosity; for there is something very significant in this phase of the feminine nature; and when I heard she liked her ortolans "*au beurre d'anchois*," I confess I wanted much to see her.

This evidently was not an easy matter, for she courted retirement, and her maid let it be known that if her mistress found herself in the slightest degree molested by strangers, or her privacy invaded, she



would order her horses, and set off for somewhere else without a moment's hesitation. I was obliged, therefore, to respect this intimation. First of all, I felt that as long as No. 4 remained I was sustained in my resolve not to close the establishment. I was like a deposed monarch at whose residence one envoy still remained, and whose sovereignty therefore was yet recognised, and I clung to this last link that united me to the world of material interest with intense eagerness.

I ventured to present Mr. Gosslett's respectful compliments in a small note, and inquire if Mrs. Pultney Dacre would wish to see the Park, in which case his phaeton and ponies were always at her disposal, as also his boat if she felt disposed to take an airing on the river; but a few lines declined these offers, in very polite terms it is true, yet in a fashion that said, "No more of these attentions, Paul"—at least it was thus I read her.

Although my contention with the company still continued, and some new menace of law was sure to reach me by every second post, and my own counsel feelingly warned me that I hadn't an inch of ground to stand on, and my costs when "cast" would be something overwhelming, I had steeled myself so thoroughly to all consequences, had so resolved to make the most of the present, that I read these minatory documents with an unmoved heart, and a degree of placid composure that now strikes me as something heroic.

I was sitting one evening in study, thinking over these things,—not depressively, not desperately; for, strangely enough, since misfortune had befallen me, I had acquired a most wonderful stock of equanimity, but I was canvassing with myself what was to come next, when the fatal hour struck, as strike it must, that sounded my expulsion from Eden, when a gentle tap came to my door. I said, "Come in," and Virginie, Mrs. Dacre's French maid, entered. She was profuse of apologies for "deranging" me. She was in despair at the bare thought of interrupting I do not know what or which of my learned occupations, but her mistress had had an accident!

"An accident!" I started as I repeated the word.

"Oh! it was not serious," she said, with a sweet smile. "It was only troublesome, as occurring in a remote spot, and to a person who like Madame was of such refined delicacy, and who could not bear consulting a strange physician,—her own doctor was on his way from India,"—she went on rambling thus, so that it was with difficulty I learned at last that Madame, when feeding the gold fish in the pond of the garden, had stepped on the rock-work and turned her ankle. The pain was very great, and Virginie feared something had been broken, though Madame was certain it was a mere sprain; and now, as the doctor has been dismissed, Madame wished to know where medical advice could be soonest obtained. I at once declared I was fully competent to treat such an injury. I had studied surgery, and could certainly

pronounce whether the case was a grave one or a mere passing accident. Virginie smiled dubiously.

"Monsieur was very young. Madame never consulted a doctor under fifty-five or sixty."

"Possibly," suggested I, "in an ordinary case, and where there were time and opportunity to choose; but here, and with an accident, an accident that if neglected or improperly treated,"—

"Ah, mon Dieu!" cried she, "don't say it! Don't say there might be unhappy results; come at once and see her!" She almost dragged me along, such was her impatience, to her mistress's room, and in less than a minute I was standing beside a sofa in a half-darkened room, where a lady lay, her face closely veiled, and a large shawl so enveloping her that all guess as to her figure or probable age was impossible. A light cambric handkerchief was spread over one foot, which rested on a cushion, and this kerchief the maid hastily snatched away as I approached, saying,—

"Monsieur is a doctor himself, Madame, and will cure you immediately."

"La!" cried she, pointing to the foot. "La!"

And certainly I needed no more formal invitation to gaze on a foot and ankle of such faultless mould and symmetry as never, even in the Greek statues, had I seen equalled. Whether there had not been time for the process of inflammation to have set up swelling or disfigurement, or whether the injury itself had been less grave than might have been apprehended, I am not able to say; but the beautiful proportions of that rounded instep, the tapering of the foot, the hollowing of the sole, the slightly mottled marble of the flesh, the blue veins swelling through the transparent skin, were all uninjured and unmarred. Ivory itself could not have been more smoothly turned than the ankle, nor of a more dazzling whiteness. To have been permitted to kneel down and kiss that foot, I would have sworn myself her slave for ever. I suppose I must have shown some signs of the rapture that was consuming me, for the maid said—

"What does the man mean? has he lost his senses?"

"I must examine the part," said I, and kneeling down, I proceeded with what I imagined to be a most surgical air, to investigate the injury. As a worshipper might have touched a holy relic, I suffered my hand to glide over that beautifully rounded instep, but all so delicately and gently that I could not say whether the thrill that touch sent through me was not the act of my own nerves. She seemed, however, to tremble, her foot moved slightly, and a gentle action of her shoulders like a shudder bespoke pain. It was the sort of movement that one might make in being tickled, and as great agony causes this movement occasionally, I said, "I trust I have not hurt you? I'd not have done so for worlds." She took her handkerchief

and pressed it to her face, and I thought she sobbed, but she never said a word.

"Alors!" cried the maid. "What do you say is to be done?"

"Ice," said I. "Iced water and perfect repose."

"And where are we to get ice in this barbarous place?"

"Madame," said I, "the place is less savage than you deem, and ice shall be procured. There is a monastery at Offenbach where they have ice throughout the year. I will despatch an estafette there at once."

The lady bent forward, and whispered something in the maid's ear.

"Madame desires to thank you sincerely," said the maid. "She is much impressed by your consideration and kindness."

"I will return in a couple of hours," said I, with a most doctorial sententiousness, and in reality eagerly desiring to be alone, and in the privacy of my own room, before I should break out in those wild ecstasies which I felt were struggling within me for utterance.

I sat down to make a clean breast of it in these confessions, but I must ask my reader to let me pass over unrecorded the extravagances I gave way to when once more alone.

There are men,—I am one of them,—who require,—constitutionally require,—to be in love. That necessity which Don Quixote proclaimed to be a condition of knightly existence,—the devotion to a mistress,—is an essential to certain natures. This species of temperament pertained to me in my boyhood. It has followed me through life with many pains and suffering, but also with great compensations. I have ever been a poor man,—my friends can tell that I have not been a lucky one,—and yet to be rich and fortunate together, I would not resign that ecstasy, that sentiment of love which, though its object may have changed, has still power to warm up the embers of my heart, and send through me a glow that revives the days of my hot youth and my high hopes.

I was now in love, and cared as little for Boards of Directors and resolutions passed in committee as for the ordinances of the Grand Lama. It might rain mandamuses and warrants, they had no power to trouble me. As I wended my way to No. 4 with my bowl of ice, I felt like a votary bearing his offering to the shrine of his patron saint. My gift might lie on the altar, but the incense of my devotion soared up to heaven.

I would gladly have visited her every hour, but she would only permit me to come twice a day. I was also timid, and when Virginia said my ten minutes was up I was dismissed. I tried to bribe Virginia, but the unworthy creature imagined, with the levity of her nation, I had designs on her own affections, and threatened to denounce me to her mistress, a menace which cost me much mortification and more money.

I don't know that the cure made great progress, perhaps I have learned since why this was so—at all events, I pursued my treatment

with assiduity, and was rewarded with a few soft-voiced words, as thus: "How kind you are!" "What a gentle hand you have!" "How pleasant that ice is!" At length she was able to move about the room. I wished to offer my arm, but she declined. Virginie was strong enough to support her. How I detested that woman! But for her, how many more opportunities had I enjoyed of offering small services and attentions! Her very presence was a perpetual restraint. She never took her eyes off me while I was in the room with her mistress — black-beady, inexpressive eyes for the most part, but with something devilish in their inscrutability that always frightened me. That she saw the passion that was consuming me, that she read me in my alternate paroxysm of delight or despair, was plain enough to me, but I could not make her my friend. She would take my presents freely, but always with the air of one whose silence was worth buying at any price, but whose co-operation or assistance no sum could compass. Her very mode of accepting my gifts had something that smote terror into me. She never thanked me, nor even affected gratitude. She would shake her head mournfully and gloomily, as though matters had come to a pretty pass between us, and as though some dreadful reckoning must one day be expected to account for all this corruption. "Ah, Monsieur Gosslett," said she one day with a sigh, "what a precipice we are all standing beside! Have you thought of the ruin you are leading us to?" These were very strange words, and though I took my watch and chain from my pocket, and gave them to her in order to induce her to explain her meaning, she only burst into tears and rushed out of the room. Was I then the happiest of mortals or the most wretched? such was the problem that drove sleep that long night from my eyelids, and found me still trying to solve it when the day broke.

Days would often pass now without Mrs. Dacre permitting me to visit her, and then Virginie significantly hinted that she was right in this, that it was for my good as well as her own, and so on. I mourned over my banishment and bewailed it bitterly. "One would think, sir, you forget my mistress was married," said Virginie to me one day; and I protest it was no more than the truth. I had completely, utterly, forgotten it, and the stern fact thus abruptly announced almost felled me to the earth.

Mrs. Dacre had promised to take a drive with me as soon as she felt able to bear the motion of a carriage, but though I often recalled the pledge, she found excuses of one kind or other to defer performance, and as I now rarely saw her, she would write me a line, sometimes two lines, on a scrap of paper, which Virginie would lay open on my table and generally shake her head very meaningly as I read it.

If Mrs. Dacre notes were very brief, they were not less enigmatical — she was the strangest writer that ever put pen to paper. Thus to

give an instance : the ice application she always referred to as "my coldness," and she would say, "How long is your coldness to continue, have I not had enough of it yet? This coldness is becoming tiresome, and if it be continued, how am I to go out with you?" In another note, referring to our intended drive, she says, "If it is a question of running away, I must have a word to say first, for though I believe you have no fears on that score, I am not so courageous." Virginie had been telling stories about my ponies; they were frisky, it is true, and it was thus her mistress alluded to them. Some disparagement of me as a whip provoked this remark from her. "As the time draws nearer I ask myself, Shall I trust myself to your guidance? Who can say what may come of it?"

At last came this one line: "I have summoned up all my courage, and I will go with you this evening. Come up at eight, and I will be ready." I ought to have mentioned before this that for nigh three weeks a vulgar-looking man, middle-aged and robust, had come to take the waters, and though he only spoke a few words of bad French, being English, had continued to put himself on terms of intimacy with all the subordinates of the household, and was constantly seen laughing with the boatmen and trying to converse with the gardeners.

Deechworth had conceived suspicion about him from the first, he connected him with the law proceedings that the company had instituted against me, and warned me to be cautious of the man. His opinion was that he belonged to the "Force." "I know it, sir," said he, "by his walk and his laugh." The detectives, according to Deechworth, have a laugh quite peculiar to themselves, it never takes them off what they are saying or thinking about. In fact, it is like the bassoon in a band, it serves just to mark the time while the air is being played by the other instruments.

"I don't like that Mr. Bracken, sir," Deechworth would say, "he ain't here for no good, you'll see, sir;" and it is not improbable that I should have perfectly agreed with this opinion if I had ever troubled my head about him at all, but the fact was my mind was very differently occupied. All Scotland Yard and Sir Richard himself might have been domiciled at the establishment without their ever giving me a moment of uneasy reflection.

Whether Mrs. Dacre's scruples were those of prudery or cowardice, whether she dreaded me as a companion or feared me as a coachman, I cannot say, but she constantly put off our intended drive, and though occasionally the few words in which she made her apologies set my heart half wild with delight, simply because I pleased to read them in a sense of my own invention, yet I grew feverish and uneasy at these delays. At last there came the one line in pencil, "I have made up my mind I will go with you to-morrow evening." It is in no extravagance or mock rapture I say it, but in plain homely truth,

I would not have changed that scrap of paper for a cheque of ten thousand on Counts.

It was my habit to lay all the little notes I received from her before me on my writing-table, and as I passed them under review to weave out for myself a story of the progress of my love. The servants who waited on me, and who alone entered my study, were foreigners, and ignorant of English, so that I could permit myself this indulgence without fear. Now on the afternoon on which I had received the latest of her despatches, I sauntered out into the wood to be alone with my own thoughts unmolested and undisturbed. I wandered on for hours, too happy to count the time, and too deeply lost in my imaginings to remember anything but my own fancies. What was to come of this strange embroglio in which I now stood; how was Fate about to deal with me? I had clearly arrived at a point where the roads led right and left. Which was I to take, and which was the right one?

Thus canvassing and discussing with myself, it was very late ere I got back to the castle, but I carried the key of a small portal gate that admitted me to my own quarters unobserved, and I could enter or pass out unnoticed. As I found myself in my study and lit my lamp, I turned to my writing-table. I started with amazement on discovering that the little notes and scraps of paper which bore Mrs. Daere's writing had disappeared. These, and a small note-book, a sort of diary of my own, had been taken away; and that the act was not that of a common thief was clear, from the fact that a valuable silver inkstand and an onyx seal mounted in gold, and some other small objects of value lay about untouched. A cold sweat broke over me as I stood there overwhelmed and panic-stricken by this discovery. The terrors of a vague and undefined danger loom over a man with an intensity far greater than the fears of a known and palpable peril. I examined the fastenings of the door and the windows to see whether force had been used, but there was no sign of such. And as I had locked the door when leaving and found it locked on my return, how had this thief found entrance except by a key? I rung the bell, but the servants were all in bed, and it was long before any one replied to my summons. Of course, servant-like, they had seen nothing, heard nothing. I sent for Deechworth; he was asleep, and came unwillingly and angry at being routed out of bed. He, too, knew nothing. He questioned me closely as to whether I had seen the papers on my table before I left home for my walk, and half vexed me by the pertinacity of his examination, and, finally, by the way in which he depreciated the value of my loss, and congratulated me on the circumstance that nothing of real worth had been abstracted. This was too much for my patience, and I declared that I had rather the thief had left me without a coat, or without a shilling, than taken these precious scraps of paper. "Oh," said he, with a sort of sneer, "I had

not the slightest suspicion of the value you attached to them." "Well, sir," said I, losing all control over my passion, "now that you see it, now that you hear it, now you know it, will you tell me at what price you will restore them to me?"

"You mean that it was I who took them?" said he quietly, and without any show of warmth.

"I don't suppose you will deny it," was my answer.

"That will do, Mr. Gosslett," said he; "that's quite enough. I hope to be able to teach you that it's one thing to defy a board of directors, and it's another to defame a respectable man. I'll make you smart for this, sir," and with these words he turned away, and left the room.

I don't know when or how the servants retired, whether I dismissed them, or whether they went of their own accord. I was like a madman. My temper excited to the last limits of reason, impelled me to this or that act of insanity. At one moment I thought of hastening after Deechworth, and with a revolver in my hand compelling him to give up the stolen papers, and I shuddered as to what I should do if he refused. At another, I determined to follow him, and offer him everything I had in the world for them: for all this time I had worked myself up to the conviction that he, and he alone, was the thief. Oh, thought I, if I had but the aid of one of those clever fellows of the detective order, whose skill wants but the faintest clue to trace out these mysteries! and suddenly I bethought me of Mr. Bracken, whom Deechworth himself had pronounced to be "one of the Force."

I rung my bell, and desired Mr. Bracken might be sent to me. The messenger was a long time absent, and came at last to say that Mr. Bracken had left the castle that evening, and taken all his luggage with him. The tidings struck me like a blow,—here, then, was the thief! And for what purpose could such a theft have been accomplished? "Tell Mr. Deechworth I want him," cried I, being no less eager to make him my deepest apologies for my false accusation, than to consult his strong common sense in my difficulty.

The servant returned to say Mr. Deechworth had gone too. He had left the castle almost immediately after our stormy interview, and was already miles away on his road to the Rhine.

In my misery and desolation, in that abandonment to utter terror and confusion in which, with the drowning instinct, one snatches at straws, I sent to know if I could speak to Mrs. Dacre, or even her maid. How shall I describe my horror as I heard that they also were gone! They had left soon after Mr. Bracken, in fact, the post-horses that took them away had passed Mr. Bracken at the gate of the park.

I know no more how the rest of the night was passed by me, how the hours were spent till day-break, than I could recount the



incidents of delirium in fever. I must have had something like a paroxysm of insanity, for I appear to have rushed from room to room, calling for different people, and in tones of heart-rending entreaty begging that I might not be deserted. Towards morning I slept, slept so soundly, that the noises of the house did not disturb me. It was late in the afternoon when I awoke. The servant brought me my coffee and my letters, but I bade him leave me, and fell off to sleep again. In this way, and with only such sustenance as a cup of milk or coffee would afford, I passed fourteen days, my state resembling that of a man labouring under concussion of the brain; indeed, so closely did the symptoms resemble those of this affection, that the doctor carefully examined my head to see whether I had not incurred some actual injury. It was five weeks before I could leave my bed and crawl down with difficulty to my study. The table was covered with the accumulated letters of thirty odd posts, and I turned over the envelopes, most of which indicated communications from the company. There was also one in my uncle's hand. This I opened and read. It was in these words:—

“So, sir, not satisfied with a life of indolence and dependence, you have now added infamy to your worthlessness, and have not even spared the members of your own family the contagion of your vice. If you can give information as to the present abode of your wretched victim, do so, as the last amends in your power, and the last act of reparation, before you are consigned to that gaol in which it is to be hoped you will end your days.”

I read this till my head reeled. Who were the members of my family I had contaminated or corrupted? Who was my wretched victim? And why I was to die in prison I knew not. And the only conclusion I could draw from it all was, that my uncle was hopelessly mad, and ought to be shut up.

A strange-looking, coarse-papered document, that till then had escaped my notice, now caught my eye. It was headed “Court of Probate and Divorce,” and set forth that on a certain day in term the case of “Macnamara versus Macnamara, Gosslett, co-respondent,” would come on for trial; the action being to obtain a rule nisi for divorce, with damages against the co-respondent.

A notice of service, duly signed by one of my own people, lay beside this; so that at last I got a faint glimmering of what my uncle meant, and clearly deserved what was implied by my “victim.”

I believe that most readers of the Times or the Morning Post could finish my story; they at all events might detail the catastrophe with more patience and temper than I could. The Macnamara divorce was a nine-days' scandal. And “if the baseness of the black-hearted iniquity of the degraded creature who crept into a family as a suppliant that he might pollute it with dishonour; who tracked his victim, as the Indian tracks his enemy, from lair to lair—silent, stealthily,



and with savage intensity—never faltering from any momentary pang of conscience, nor hesitating in his vile purpose from any passing gleam of virtue; if this wretch, stigmatised by nature with a rotten heart, and branded by a name that will sound appropriately in the annals of crime, for he is called Gosslett;”—if all this, and a great deal more in the same fashion, is not familiar to the reader, it is because he has not carefully studied the Demosthenic orations of the Court of Atches. In one word, I was supposed to have engaged the affections and seduced the heart of Mrs. Macnamara, who was a cousin of my own, and the daughter of the Rev. W. Dudgeon, in whose house I had been “brought up,” &c. I had withdrawn her from her husband, and taken her to live with me at Lahneck under the name of Dacre, where our course of life—openly, fearlessly infamous—was proved by a host of witnesses; in particular by a certain Virginie, maid of the respondent, who deposed to having frequently found me at her feet, and who confessed to have received costly presents to seduce her into favouring the cause of the betrayer. Mr. Bracken, a retired detective, who produced what were called the love-letters, amused the jury considerably by his account of my mad freaks and love-sick performances. As for Mrs. Macnamara herself, she entered no appearance to the suit; and the decree nisi was pronounced, with damages of five thousand pounds, against Paul Gosslett, who the counsel declared was in “a position to pay handsomely for his vices, and who had ample means to afford himself the luxury of adultery.” I was told that the mob were prepared to stone me if I had been seen; and that, such was the popular excitement about me, a strong police force was obliged to accompany a red-whiskered gentleman to his house because there was a general impression abroad that he was Gosslett.

Of course I need not say I never ventured back to England, and I indite this, my last confession, from a small village in Bohemia, where I live in board—partial board it is—with a very humble family, who, though not complimentary to me in many things, are profuse in the praises of my appetite.

I rarely see an English newspaper, but a Galignani fell in my way about a week ago, in which I read the marriage of Mrs. Macnamara with R. St. John, Esq., the then secretary of Legation at Rio. This piece of news gave me much matter of reflection as to my unhappy victim, and has also enabled me to unseal my lips about the bridegroom, of whom I knew something once before.

The man who is always complaining is the terror of his friends; hence, if nothing but bad luck attend me, I shall trouble the world no more with my Confessions; if Fate, however, should be pleased to smile ever so faintly on me, you shall hear once more from poor Paul Gosslett.

## PARLIAMENT AND ARMY REFORM.

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THE purchase system has obtained a renewal of its lease for one year from the hands of a moribund House of Commons. This is only what was to be expected. With a general election imminent, it was too much to hope that members would commit themselves to a course which must unquestionably for some time largely increase the army estimates; and at an early stage of the debate on Mr. Trevelyan's motion, the Liberals, who were disposed to vote in his favour, were chilled by a reminder that it would be an awkward plea to advance on the hustings, that they had assisted in adding a penny or two to the income tax, in order to abolish a system under which we have rubbed along well enough for a couple of hundred years. Even Mr. Otway, an honest and zealous reformer, advised Mr. Trevelyan not to press his resolution until more prosperous times,—in other words, until the first year of a new Parliament, instead of the last year of an old one. But the whole tone of the debate showed with unmistakable clearness that, save in the minds of a few obstinate opponents of progress, the purchase system is virtually condemned, and that, if it were not for the expense necessarily attending its abolition, it would soon be numbered in the list of bygone abuses. It was admitted by Sir John Pakington that, "if we were now commencing to form and organise our army, no reasonable man would be likely to think of adopting the purchase system," and yet he immediately proceeded to argue in its favour. Captain Vivian, who moved a series of amendments to Mr. Trevelyan's motion, admitted that there were "grounds of complaint" against the system, and advocated the abolition of purchase above the rank of captain, but had no sooner risen to speak than he commenced to defend the system against Mr. Trevelyan's attack. The debate was full of similar inconsistencies. Men sought for excuses founded on expediency for a system which they are forced to admit is wrong in fact and theory; and having once resolved to oppose a change on the ground of expense, made a point of strengthening their case by other arguments. Those, however, who have watched narrowly the progress of the question marked this noteworthy difference between its state in the present and the past year. Twelve months ago, when the question was brought forward, it met with but small attention in the House of Commons, and the press was divided in opinion. This time Mr. Trevelyan's opponents in Parliament had furnished up their whole armoury of rusty weapons,

and the same men who opposed the abolition of flogging stoutly defended the retention of purchase; while, on the other hand, with two notable exceptions, the press was unanimous in urging that the system must be done away with, though, as a matter of course, the details of the proposed scheme were not always favourably considered. Thus in a year we have sprung from sleepy security among the military Conservatives in the House, and doubt among the public, to vigorous and armed opposition amidst the former, and settled conviction of the necessity of a change amidst the latter. Need we doubt which will win in the long run? We have seen an even more obstinate opposition overcome in the matter of corporal punishment. Twelve months ago, when Mr. Otway was about to divide the House, the Secretary at War solemnly assured the wavering Adullamites that his Royal Highness the Field-Marshal Commanding in Chief had informed him that the Adjutant-General declared that, if flogging were abolished, he could no longer be responsible for the discipline of the forces. This year we have seen a majority in Parliament wipe out flogging from the list of punishments, and yet we have not heard that either the Adjutant-General or the Commander-in-Chief has felt it his duty to resign his office. In spite of Horse Guards influence,—and it is no secret how strongly that influence has been brought to bear on the matter,—we do not fear to adopt the simile used by the O'Donoghue, in the first Irish debate of the session, in speaking of the Irish Church Establishment, and describe the purchase system as a criminal who has been convicted in a court of justice, and has been discharged on his own recognizances, to appear for punishment when called for.

Nevertheless the advocates of army reform must in no way relax their efforts. There is a huge barrier of ignorance and prejudice to be broken down, and sturdy sinews and strong blows are needed for the task. And though the breach is yearly being widened, and fresh hands are coming up for the work, the defenders are in possession, and we know what advantage lies in that. Some stand in the gap, and fight like men; others try to make smoke that will obscure the vision, and hinder the attack. It was remarked by General Peel that a great deal is said on the subject of promotion by purchase by persons who understand very little about it; and the statement is well founded. But we should argue different conclusions from the same premises. We think it very unlikely that those who attack the system as it stands would do so without having paid attention to it beforehand, whereas nothing is more likely than that those who have never thought the matter out would object to change. Indeed, why should they do otherwise? The majority of those who wish things to remain as they are ground their preference on the desire to avoid trouble; while those officers who have purchased their steps shrink from any interference, lest it should damage

their chance of getting back all the money they have paid. Some few there are who base their Conservatism on conviction; it is these only whom the reforming party has to fear, and it is to the arguments of these that we would devote our attention.

Even the strongest friends of the purchase system must acknowledge that a strong *prima facie* case has been made out against it. It cannot be denied that in theory, at all events, it is bad to buy and sell places of honour; it is impossible to say that when two men have equal claims upon the country for promotion, it is right that the junior should go over the head of his senior, simply because he has more money; and the principle must be admitted to be vicious which encourages risking the capital of a whole family on the life of a single member. If these points alone can be established, a strong *prima facie* case is, we submit, clearly made out for the abolition of the purchase system. Inasmuch as a conspicuous place in the Army List published by authority is given to a table of the prices of commissions,—as the fact of men purchasing over their brother-officers is notorious, instances occurring in the “*Gazette*” every week,—and further, as in the event of an officer's death from any other cause than wounds received on service, the money he has sunk in the purchase of steps is lost to his representatives,—these points would appear to be established beyond the possibility of question. But a new champion of the purchase system has arisen, who takes issue with its opponents at the very commencement of their case. In a pamphlet on “*Army Reform*” in connection with the purchase system and regimental organisation, Mr. O'Dowd denies that there is such a thing as purchase in the British army. “The conventional appellation by which the system is known is as damning as it is undeserved,” says Mr. O'Dowd. “‘Purchase’ is no definition of the rule of promotion in Her Majesty's cavalry, guards, and line, which is that of seniority and professional qualification, tempered or affected largely by an arrangement of money deposits.” He says that “this system, when examined, turns out to be one of strict seniority, in which, however, in the great majority of instances, the person eligible for promotion by seniority and professional fitness must also make a deposit of a fixed sum of money, which is religiously returned to him on the surrender of his position, or to his representatives in the event of his death through the casualties of war.” These are the statements upon which Mr. O'Dowd proceeds to build up a theory; and it is important to bring to notice the fallacies which they contain, because Mr. O'Dowd has ready to his hand an influential organ in which to ventilate his views among all classes of military men, and because his pamphlet was largely quoted from in the debate in Parliament, while the phrase which he prints in capital letters, and proposes to substitute for the familiar expression “purchase system,” bids fair to

become the war-cry of a party,—namely, “a self-supporting system of retirement by means of deposits.”

In the first place, then, we utterly deny that the system, when examined, turns out to be one of strict seniority, no matter how the expression be qualified. It is an absolutely essential feature of a system of strict seniority that every man who enters shall be certain of obtaining his promotion before any of those below him, which is not the case here. The instant an officer fails to make the “deposit” of which Mr. O’Dowd speaks, his juniors pass over his head one after another, and seniority goes for nothing as far as he is concerned, while, on the other hand, the senior of those prepared with the “deposit” jumps over the heads of all above him not prepared with the money. It is therefore an entire misstatement to call this a system of strict seniority. Neither is it true to say that the deposit is religiously returned on the surrender of the position, for so soon as an officer arrives within two years of the time at which his promotion to the list of general officers will take place, he becomes unable to get back his purchase money; and when once he is promoted to be a major-general, every farthing of his “deposits” is gone for ever past possibility of recall. He may resign his position, but he will never see back one shilling of his lost capital. So that, in fact, the “deposits” are only “religiously returned” when an officer decides on quitting the service at a comparatively early stage, and abandoning all hope of making it permanently a profession. Then, as to the return of the money to the representatives “in the event of death through the casualties of war,” this expression is deliberately calculated to mislead; for it is only in the event of an officer’s death by wounds received in action that his surviving relatives receive back the “deposits,” and then only if by his death they have been “deprived of their means of support.” Yet it is proverbial that deaths through wounds received in action form but a small portion of the casualties of war, as compared with the deaths from exposure and climate; while, again, the casualties of war are themselves but a drop in the ocean of the casualties caused by disease and bad climate in peace. Another point which the pamphleteer totally ignores is, that the sum returned to the relatives in the event of death in battle is but a fraction of the “deposits” actually made; for only the regulation price of the deceased officer’s commissions is returned, while the price actually paid for them varies from a hundred and fifty per cent. to fifty per cent. in excess of the regulation price.

The fact that such loose assertions as these, devoid of foundation in fact, are taken as the groundwork for a superstructure under whose shelter the defenders of the purchase system gather in admiration, ought alone to be sufficient to show the weakness of the cause; but even this zealous advocate of the “deposit” system suggests that it might be improved. To begin with, he thinks purchase should

stop after the rank of captain; for that the important post of field-officer, involving the efficiency, comfort, and happiness of hundreds, ought not to be so obtained, although purchase does very well up to the rank of captain. Of course this would be a step in the right direction, but it needs small power to see that it is only a question of degree. If it is desirable that the promotion to a lieutenant-colonelcy should not be obtainable by purchase, the reason must be that purchase is a bad method of appointment; and if it is bad in one case, it must be bad in all, though the evil effects may be less in degree. For hundreds read scores; and the captain's fitness for his post involves the efficiency, comfort, and happiness of his men to almost, if not quite, the same extent as the field-officer's. And here again another fallacy is introduced. Of course, says the pamphleteer, promotion from subaltern's to captain's rank must be always an affair of seniority; and "where there is seniority there must be purchase of some kind; and if there be purchase, it is better to have it policed by the State," and so on. We distinctly deny that purchase must accompany seniority. The Royal Artillery, the Royal Engineers, and the Royal Marines have no purchase of any kind whatever, direct or indirect, and they have promotion purely by seniority. The statement affords another example of those loose and erroneous assertions which pass current with people who will not examine for themselves, but which only need to be brought to the touchstone of fact, to be proved utterly worthless. It is, however, a very favourite argument among the lovers of purchase. They point to the Indian army, before its amalgamation with the Royal army, and say, "These men were obliged to introduce a sort of purchase system among themselves, in order to quicken promotion, and you will find the same thing done wherever there is pure seniority." Now we are no advocates of the Indian bonus system. It was a wretched failure as far as accelerating promotion went. There were plenty of subalterns with from fifteen to eighteen years' service in the Indian army when the mutiny broke out, and they had been paying heavily for steps throughout their service. But even this plan had not the gross faults of the purchase system. There was no putting the man who had money over the head of the man who had not; and the subscriptions to the fund were paid by all alike from a professional income which enabled them, in those days, before India became so expensive as it is now, to afford to lay by something towards a future retirement. The East India Company never made this fund an excuse for refusing to pension its officers after a fair term of service. If they chose to make up a purse among them to supplement the retiring pension given by the Company, well and good; but it was not considered necessary, as in the Royal army, that an officer, after thirty years' service, should forfeit either his claim to pension from the State, or his claim to the return of the "deposits" he has made during his service. When an

Indian officer retired on full pay, he received from his regimental retiring fund the sum to which he was entitled. When an officer under the purchase system retires upon full pay, he loses every shilling of his purchase money. It is confiscated by the State.

The opponents of Mr. Trevelyan's motion for the abolition of purchase may be divided into two classes, the staunch bigots, who will have no change, who cling to the system under which, and in spite of which, England's army has done so well for two centuries; and the half-hearted negotiators who ask for a compromise, and are willing to see alterations made, but not to see the whole system destroyed. These last find their representatives in Mr. O'Dowd in the press, and Captain Vivian in the House of Commons, who have embarked in the same boat, and sail under the same colours. Their proposition is this, as it may be stated in a few words, to reduce the number of regimental commissioned ranks to three, viz: lieutenant-colonel, captain, and lieutenant, and to abolish purchase above the rank of captain. Thus there would be only two purchasable steps, the first commission and the promotion to a company; and instead of finding four barriers in his way to command a regiment, at his promotion successively to a lieutenantancy, company, majority, and lieutenant-colonelcy, the non-purchasing officer, once appointed, would only have one purchase promotion before him. It was very generally believed that this suggestion, in a modified form, would be adopted by the Government; but whatever intentions may have been in Sir John Pakington's mind when he came down to the House, the tone of the debate and the evident unwillingness evinced to authorise expenditure enabled him to go with the ruck, and save his pocket at the expense of his conscience. On the whole, we are not altogether sorry that this scheme died a natural death; for though it had merits of no mean order, it could only have been a temporary reform. If once the abolition of purchase above the rank of captain had condemned the system, purchase must before long have gone altogether, and then an entirely fresh arrangement would have been required. As it is, the system can be dealt with as a whole, and its entire removal with one and the same stroke will probably be far the most satisfactory course. For the more closely we examine the matter, the more distinctly do we see that the purchase system must be cut out root and branch, for that its existence interferes materially with the well-being of the whole army.

The charges which are brought against the purchase system are direct and indirect. It is charged with being in itself necessarily evil, inasmuch as the sale of office cannot but be a national sin. It is accused of bearing hardly on the purchasing officers, who sink large sums of money on the risk of their life, obtaining in their pay little or no more than the interest on the money invested, so that they actually give their services to the State for nothing, only receiving



back their principal on leaving the army; whereas in any other profession in the world they would have either the interest of their capital as an addition to their income during their service, or the accumulated interest as an addition to their capital on retiring, together with a pension from the State. It is accused of bearing hardly also on the non-purchasing officers, who are passed over simply because they have no money, and for no other reason in the world. These are the direct charges against the system; but, important as they are, they are small in comparison to the indirect charges. It is accused of introducing a spirit of dishonest traffic among our officers, of excluding many able men from high positions, and of promoting men who are not efficient; of closing the higher ranks of the army to those who have merit without money; of effectually preventing promotion from the ranks to any extent, and thus,—and this is, to our mind, the climax of the evil,—keeping up the shameful system of recruiting, which is a foul stain upon our national honour. To this the defendants reply that the army is well officered and well manned, and that there is no necessity for any change of system. On the one hand, we have Mr. Trevelyan, with epigrammatic terseness, describing the army as officered from the froth and manned from the dregs of society; on the other hand, we have Conservative military members appealing to the deeds performed by English soldiers, and the victories achieved by English arms, as proof of the excellence of the system as it exists.

The whole issue lies in this. Is the army to be a profession or not? Are the officers to enter it with a view to making it the pursuit of their lives, and devoting their entire energies to military service; or are they to enter for a brief space as a pastime, and therefore, as a matter of course, not to look seriously upon their duties? Are the ranks to be filled by men who seek the army voluntarily, with their eyes open, as a good profession,—in which case the highest punishment would be dismissal from the service,—or are we to bait traps with money and drink for the scapegraces of large towns,—for even these will not come voluntarily,—and force them to remain and do their duty in the service by means of a severe penal code? To our mind, the question admits of only one answer. If it were the case that the only duties of a soldier or an officer were to fight the enemy, we might say let matters remain as they are. However low one descends in the social scale, there will always be found there plenty of good pluck and courage. But the duties of war are rare and far between, and the duties of peace are constant, and ever at hand. The army which is best constituted and organised for a time of peace will also behave best in time of war, and during peace it will be a blessing instead of a curse to the nation. As matters stand, we take any man into the ranks without knowledge of his previous career; we angle for men with bounty; we pay recruiting sergeants levy



money, and crimps "bringing" money to get us men, concerning whom we make no inquiry, except as to their physical fitness to be food for powder. In these days we do make some effort to humanise them when once they are caught; but, assuming that they will be, or, at all events, that a large number will be bad characters, we fence them in with restrictions, and create a code of laws which are purely artificial, but whose infraction is severely punished. It is assumed that they must be kept in order with the strong hand, and the strong hand is held over them. Brought into the army by the promise of a life of freedom, what wonder that they desert in thousands? And then they are advertised in the "Hue and Cry," and a price is put upon them. Captured, they are brought in handcuffs to the regiment from which they have deserted, tried, imprisoned, and restored to duty, but with a bad name. The screw is put on harder than ever, and there is a second desertion, and another recapture; and so on, till the end comes in an ignominious dismissal, coupled with the marking of the breast with the letters of shame, and yet hailed with delight by the unwilling soldier. These bad bargains cost the State no small sum. The heavy votes for military law, prisons, and police,—the large sums of bounty money, levy money, bringing money,—the huge expenditure on hospital and medical attendance caused by misconduct,—the loss of service during desertion and imprisonment,—might all be either removed or greatly diminished by the recognition of the simple fact that the army should be made so desirable a profession as to render dismissal the highest possible punishment. When this is acknowledged, and the army is sought after eagerly by the youth of the country, a test of character may be applied before admission, and the bad men, who are the cause of the penal system now in vogue, kept out of the ranks. But how is this to be accomplished? The mere raising of pay will never suffice. It might draw a sufficient number of good private soldiers; but if we are to have good non-commissioned officers, on whom so much of our discipline depends, a better class of men must be induced to join. The complaint is universal throughout the army at the present time that it is most difficult to find good men to promote. How are such men to be brought into the army as we require for this purpose?

Before answering this question, we must touch on one other point,—the question of length of service. It is very generally admitted that the service would be far more popular if enlistments were for a shorter period; and probably most officers will admit that they would rather command young soldiers of less than ten years' service than old soldiers of more than twelve years. But if it is to become a matter of course that after a short period of service there must follow removal from the army, it ceases to be a profession, and few men would be so unwise as to sacrifice the best years of their youth to a career which holds out no promise for the future. In an article

which we published in February last, we discussed the relative merits of young soldiers and old soldiers, and quoted the very pertinent remarks of General Trochu on this subject. Since that time an interesting pamphlet on Army Organisation has been published by Major Leahy, of the Royal Engineers, in which he clearly shows the great expense thrown upon the country by the re-engagement of old soldiers; and puts very plainly before his readers that we might have 30,000 young soldiers in the ranks, and 30,000 old soldiers in an army of reserve, for the same cost as is entailed by the 30,000 old soldiers in the ranks. The advantages to a nation of keeping men only a comparatively short time in the ranks, and then passing them to a reserve, supplying their places with fresh troops, are so obvious, that there is small doubt but we shall before long see this system introduced. Under such a system there would never be any lack of privates; but how about the non-commissioned officers? Would really good men enlist if, at the end of seven years or so, they must leave the service? The ordinary working man would reap decided advantage from a seven years' service, with its opportunities of education and travel, and the subsequent pension or retaining fee for service in the reserve; but this would not meet the case of the better educated classes who aspire to something higher. To them the army must be made a profession, and it can only be made so by opening the higher posts to merit, even though it be shown in the ranks, which are now looked on as the one place from which a commission is never to be obtained.

On this point we are undoubtedly at issue with the majority of officers in the British army, who would have no promotion from the ranks; and, strange to say, we are at issue with the majority of non-commissioned officers as well, for, with their experience of matters as now constituted, they have no wish to be promoted. They have learned to look upon promotion to a commission, unless it be to a non-combatant post, a quartermastership or a paymastership, or something of that sort, as a positive misfortune. And why? Because, in the first place, they find themselves nearly ruined. They are launched into a position where the ordinary expenditure is twice or three times the income, and where their poverty prevents them from taking their share in the customary expenses of the officers. For this they are looked down upon, and they find themselves without society. No longer able to associate with the non-commissioned officers who were so lately their friends, tabooed by the officers among whom their lot is now cast, they are isolated and unhappy. Their habits, too, unfit them to a certain extent for the society of the officers, for the class from which they spring is other than that to which they are raised. Hence, in most cases, married men are chosen for promotion; because, being married, they will not live at the mess and become wet blankets to their brother-officers of superior breeding. Thus, as

matters now stand, it is, as a rule, an injury to a non-commissioned officer to give him a commission; and his promotion is a nuisance to his brother-officers, who complain that he interrupts the harmony of their society, and, if he is married, that his wife is neither by education nor habits a fit associate for the ladies of the regiment. That is the present state of affairs.

But suppose it were said that from a given date one-third of the commissions in the army would be given to non-commissioned officers of not more than seven years' service, and who would, as a matter of course, be unmarried. At once an immense alteration would take place. Instead of the utter hopelessness of any advancement deterring men of good education and position from enlisting, the prizes held out would be well worth acceptance. A short service in the ranks would be no hardship in comparison with the opportunities afforded of making a career, especially when the man of decent position would no longer be such a rarity in the ranks as now. Officers say that men of any refinement or education would never enlist, because of the discomforts of a soldier's life,—that men of respectable position would never consent to be herded up in a barrack-room, night and day, with men of the low class from which the majority of soldiers are taken, or to submit to the daily sights and sounds which would offend their eyes and ears. If this be true, it is a strong argument for some slight alteration in barracks, and that is all. Besides, if inducements sufficient were held out, there would not be only one such man in a regiment or a company, but many, and they might live together. There is no valid reason why men should not be allowed to choose their own companions for the barrack-room. A gentleman can keep his refinement through many rough times and much enforced submission to coarse usages. African travellers have not forgotten all their manners when they come home, though they may have been subject to strangely unpleasant customs. Only hold out sufficient inducements in the way of future prospects, not too remote, and the man of energy and courage will cheerfully submit to a present inconvenience. By these means young men of good position and education, without the means to pay for the expensive education of a military college, might easily be induced to enlist as the stepping-stone to a commission. Youth, education, intelligence, activity, zeal, would be their characteristics. What splendid material for non-commissioned officers, and, duly trained, what first-rate material for officers, is here! An educational test, before promotion to a commission, would be necessary; the real test would be the opinion of the officers of the regiment, who would form the recommending council. Sprinkle through the ranks a few such men as this in each regiment, and how soon the whole tone of the service will improve. How soon the parents, who now look upon enlistment as degradation and disgrace to their son, will learn to look upon it as the opening to an honour-

able career, and to the companionship of a superior class, instead of an enforced association with reprobates. Once begin to raise the tone, and the character test may soon be applied. Even as it is, the black sheep are the exception in the service; under the system proposed, there would be absolutely no place for them in the ranks. But whenever this opening is made, whenever the commissioned ranks of the army are opened to merit in the non-commissioned ranks, at the same time two existing abuses must be abolished,—public-house recruiting, with its train of levy money and bringing money, and the purchase of either first appointments or promotion. The recruiting system must be changed, to prevent the possibility of depraved characters troubling the service with their presence; the purchase must be abolished, to give the poor men who rise from the ranks an equal chance with those who obtain their appointments by other means.

But then, say the advocates of purchase, if you abolish this system of promotion by a combination of seniority and cash, what can you substitute for it? If you fall back on pure seniority, the result will be simple stagnation, as we have seen on former occasions, and as we shall very soon see again in the non-purchase corps,—the Artillery, Engineers, and Marines. If you fall back on selection, you will open the door to the very grossest jobbery, and interest will overrule seniority and merit together. Your proposed remedies, they say, are worse than the disease. To this we have a ready answer. The rate at which promotion shall go on lies entirely at the discretion of the State. To make the promotion as rapid as desirable is a mere question of providing proper retiring allowances; in other words, it is a mere question of money. The seniority corps have fallen into a wretched state of stagnation, only because there is a complete want of any proper system of retirement. In the words of the report drawn up by the Select Committee of last year, the present "combination of contrivances is unsatisfactory, complicated, uncertain in its operations, based upon no clear principle, and inadequate for its purpose;" and the principles which should govern a proper system of retirement are laid down by the committee as a limit of age for compulsory retirement from active duties, a graduated rate of retired pay, which every officer should be entitled to claim after a given number of years' service, and facilities for compounding the retired pay of officers for a sum of money down. Perhaps there never was a committee that went more carefully into its work than this. Including men of every shade of political opinion, men in office and men out of office, men famous as army reformers, such as Major O'Reilly, Mr. Otway, and Mr. Trevelyan, and men notable as rigid Conservatives, as Colonel Percy Herbert and Colonel North,—including the Secretary of State for War of the Liberal Government, the Marquis of Hartington, and having Mr. Childers, the Financial Secretary of the Liberal Government, as its chairman, its recommendations were not

likely to err on the side of undue expenditure of public money. Yet Sir John Pakington has overruled the scheme which, after mature deliberation and consultation with the Controller and Actuary of the National Debt Office, that committee brought forward; and a scheme of his own, concocted in a hole and corner of the War Office, is to be introduced, instead of this, which had given universal satisfaction to the regiments concerned, and to the country, so far as may be gathered from the fact that the press was unanimous in its favour. Thus this vitally important question has already been shelved for a year, and is still unsettled. Had the committee's plan been adopted, it would now have been in full operation, its working would have been seen, and an opportunity would have been afforded of judging what retirement scheme would answer, when the State takes up its proper duties of providing pensions for the officers of the line who have grown grey in its service. There is every reason to believe that such a scheme, modified to meet the requirements of the line, would answer every purpose in making promotion sufficiently rapid.

Then, as regards selection, although instances of interest overriding all other claims would probably occur, they would be shown up at the bar of public opinion, and a course of unfair dealing could never be persevered in. Look, for instance, at the commands or full colonelcies of regiments. There was a time when they were grossly jobbed; now the selections give universal satisfaction. With the press actively on the look out to detect and expose undue favouritism, it would scarcely be possible to make bad selections, either by choosing unfit men or passing over those who are fit. Besides, there is nothing new in the principle of selection for commands of regiments; only it has been hampered and crushed by the purchase system. A single instance given by Sir Duncan Macdougall, in his evidence before the Royal Commission on Purchase of 1857, will suffice to show this. Major Ferguson, of the 85th, who was "one of the most magnificent fellows in the army, and through everything during the Peninsular war," was purchased over for the lieutenant-colonelcy by an officer brought from another regiment. The Duke of Wellington felt that it was very hard upon him; and a disagreeable affair occurring not long afterwards in another regiment, and it being necessary to give the command to some energetic and determined man, the Duke selected Major Ferguson from the whole of the Peninsular army for the command.

The rest of the story had better be told in Sir Duncan Macdougall's own words. "A very singular thing was this, and it shows how much depends upon chance in purchase. If I had come off picket at Bayonne five minutes later than I did one day, Major Ferguson never would have had the command of the — regiment, and Sir George Brown probably never would have been adjutant-general at the Horse Guards, nor second in command in the Crimea; and the

circumstances were these :—I was marching from picquet at Bayonne. I passed the tent of Major Ferguson, and he said, 'I want to speak to you.' I halted the picquet. 'Here,' said he, 'is a letter I have received from Lord Fitzroy Somerset.' It was offering him the command of the — regiment by purchase. I said, 'I am very glad to hear it;' and he said, 'But I cannot purchase, and I have written a letter to refuse.' I took the letter and tore it up, and I said, 'Write immediately, and say that you will purchase.' He said, 'I cannot: I have only so much.' 'Well,' I said, 'that is quite enough. Brown is the senior captain, and he shall give so much; Lieutenant Wilkinson shall give so much, and so on; I know that Gubbins will give £200 to become senior captain.' I was the fourth captain, and I said, 'I will give £100.' He wrote the letter, and got the lieutenant-colonelcy. Captain Brown was then away, and when he came up he found that we had arranged all about the purchase. But Lord Wellington would have been obliged to look out for another officer in consequence of Major Ferguson not being able to purchase; my coming off picquet five minutes later would have prevented it, but in consequence of this it was all arranged." Thus, if his brother-officers had not made up a purse to enable Major Ferguson to purchase, the Duke of Wellington's selection would have gone for nothing, the — regiment would not have had the efficient commanding officer they required, and the public would have been losers. It is worth the notice of our non-military readers that the increase of pay from a majority to a lieutenant-colonelcy, a step the regulation price of which is £1,300, is one shilling a day, or less than one and a half per cent. interest on the capital sunk.

This is a specimen of selection hampered by purchase. Now who are the men that object so much to a system of selection? As Mr. Trevelyan pointed out, the very ones who are always so angry with civilians presuming to say anything against the Horse Guards. But in truth the system of selection would be more a name than a reality. Seniority would be the rule by which men would be advanced to commands, except where there was either notorious unfitness on the part of the senior, or striking and exemplary claims on the part of a comparatively junior officer. In the Artillery, for example, where regimental promotion goes strictly and purely by seniority, the higher commands, such as districts and brigades, are given by selection; and we do not hear of perpetual jealousies and heartburnings being in existence. We are inclined to think that too much stress has been laid on the principle of selection, the application of which would really be very limited; while the jobbery which would arise from it has been unduly magnified into a gigantic bugbear.

Intimately connected with the purchase system, interwoven, indeed, with every part of our military scheme, is the question of education.

One-third of the commissions being given to non-commissioned officers, Sir Charles Trevelyan proposes to obtain two-thirds of the remaining officers by a combination of nomination and competition, followed by a course of training at a military college. He proposes that the commander-in-chief should keep a list, as now, on which the names of those candidates of whose antecedents he is satisfied should be inscribed, and that these should then be subjected to an examination, not in special subjects, but in their general education, so as to obtain the best material for the service which a liberal general education can bestow; and that the selected candidates should go through a course of professional training at a military college, which would instruct them in military science and a soldier's duties, at the same time testing their moral fitness for a commission. No better course could be adopted, provided the age of entrance be not brought too low, provided the examination be such as really to test the whole work of the candidate's school-career, and to defeat the abominable system of cramming which is ruining half the energy and intellect of the country, and provided a better tone be introduced than now exists at Sandhurst.

The question of age is of vital importance. It is the taking a boy away from school, before he has obtained any liberal education, that is so fatal to all honest, independent thought. Before his mind is formed, his energies are all forced into one groove, and he is trained to view things only in one light. Sent to Sandhurst at sixteen, a boy learns to adopt the traditions of the college and of the regiment into which he afterwards is turned as his gospel and his creed. They must be right. It is treason to think otherwise. Take the purchase system for an instance. Lord Clyde said before the Commission of 1857, "I have not thought out the question. I found the system of purchase established when I entered as a boy of fifteen; I am now in my 63rd year. I was present at the battles of Vimiera and Corunna, and on the expedition to Walcheren, and came home again before I was sixteen, and finding that, and living always with troops under the system that has gone on, I had ceased to think of it until now, and I have not thought it out." But when he did think it out, he strongly condemned the system. Perhaps no better illustration of this bigotry, on the part of military men, to the creed in which they are brought up can be found than in the fact that one officer gave evidence before the Commission that he had been purchased over eighteen times, and had been eighteen years getting his company, but was now, nevertheless, strongly in favour of the system. Few men have thought over the question of professional education more carefully than Lord Macaulay; few men approached the question with a more powerful intellect; and he writes, in speaking of education for the Civil Service of India, "Men who have been engaged, up to one or two and twenty, in studies which have no immediate connection with



the business of any profession, and of which the effect is merely to open, to invigorate, and to enrich the mind, will generally be found, in the business of every profession, superior to men who have, at eighteen or nineteen, devoted themselves to the special studies of their calling." But the majority of officers of high standing, or of more than ten years' service in the army, will be found crying out against giving commissions at a later age than seventeen or eighteen. They say that discipline cannot be taught, that the officers are not pliant enough, after that age. Depend upon it, if the system of discipline is good, it will commend itself more thoroughly to them when they are old enough to appreciate its value, than when they are mere boys, and look upon all discipline as a bore. But most fortunately, just as the tide of prejudice was sweeping backwards, and the age of entrance to the military colleges was to be reduced, Lord Eustace Cecil stepped forward and obtained the consent of Government to the appointment of a Royal Commission to investigate and report upon the whole system of military education. He has done good service to the country and the army, and deserves the thanks of all sincere army-reformers.

We are a strange people in our dealings with military matters. We spend more money per man on our troops than any other army in the world, nearly twice as much, or more than twice as much, as some; yet we have to tout in public-houses for recruits, and we have an almost universal discontent on all sides. Much is due to our wretched double military government, with two conflicting interests perpetually hauling against each other,—much to the weakness and truckling to popularity or private interests of successive Secretaries of State for War. It is a hard task for those who have the interest of the army at heart, and who are willing to work with all their might for its improvement. They may seem to fail, as Mr. Trevelyan seems to have failed, for a time; but truth and honesty will win in the end; and if failures seem to be often repeated, we would ask them to learn from that noble-hearted prelate, Archbishop Whately, how never to fail. "Some consider me," he wrote, "as very sanguine, because I always attempt whatever has even a slight prospect of success, and am never disheartened by failure. But the fact is, I never do fail; for my orders are, not to conquer, but only to fight; and whenever I do happen to conquer also, that is so much over and above."



## WOLVES AND WOLF-HUNTING IN FRANCE.

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BARRISH sportsmen must often envy France the possession of the wolf. Indeed, an undergraduate of Dublin, being called on to enumerate the most regrettable events in Irish history, commenced his list with that of the extermination of the last wolf in 1710. No brute in Europe is better adapted than the wolf for being run to death, and none affords the huntsman a better apology for hunting. A bear hunt is most frequently a duel or an assassination. The stag, the roe-buck, and even the wild boar, are inoffensive when unmolested; the fox and the badger are too small to be personally dangerous, but the wolf is at once a foe to be respected for his teeth, a brigand accountable for a life of rapine, and a test of strength and mettle for the fleetest dogs. By the term dogs must, however, be understood the ordinary pack, for the greyhound is often able to attain the wolf on sight, and in such case he invariably mars the sport. In the Aube a couple or two of greyhounds usually accompany the meute both in boar and wolf hunting; the consequence is that most frequently, when the game takes the open country, the greyhounds follow the wolf on sight, and either seize it at once, or so impede its pace as to enable the pack to arrive and finish the hunt abruptly. In some cases the chances of an exciting run are further diminished by the admission of rifles, and it too often happens that a solitary wolf, the sole hope of the meet, is shot dead in the cover before the dogs give tongue, leaving the huntsmen to disperse for lack of game, or to go in for foxes. Still, occasionally, in spite of guns and greyhounds, a fair run takes place, and in such case the sport, for heat and spirit, is all the most ardent huntsman can desire; the wolf bursts unexpectedly from the cover, and straining for some distant point in possibly another department, bounds straight ahead through all kinds of country, and leads the hounds a chase which often ends in their exhaustion and discomfiture. But the wolf is far less often the object of a royal hunt than of a popular battue. His destruction is sought by persons whose sole aim is to destroy him, and the means least likely to fail are those adopted for the purpose; his retreat is surrounded by the peasants and villagers of the locality, and sometimes by the united populations of two or three cantons. All sorts of weapons are called into use; old muskets, horse-pistols, bayonets, swords, bludgeons, and above all, pitchforks. Dogs of every description join the hunt, from the huge farm watch-dog to the com-

mon village cur. A circle is then formed round the thicket, and when the nature of the ground and the number of persons permit, the ring tightens gradually till the assistants are able to join hands. A second circle is then formed outside, composed of strong nets suspended across the runs and issues, and in order to scare the wolf from attempting to pass elsewhere, the men hang up their caps and blouses in the intervening spaces. Up to this moment everything is accomplished with the greatest precaution and the least noise possible, but no sooner are the arrangements complete than the dogs are let loose, and the men begin shouting and hallooing and thrashing the foliage with long sticks. Presently the dogs grow furious. Their instinctive aversion for the wolf becomes redoubled by the consciousness of his presence, and when excited from time to time with a heavy scent, they howl and gnash with a sort of frenzy. This excitement of the dogs soon gains the men, who, from mere noise and clamour, proceed gradually to yells and imprecations. They then set to, regularly abusing the wolf in terms, and the less disposed he shows himself to quit the cover, the more vehement are the invectives heaped upon him. The prevailing apostrophe is, "*Bouge là, affreuse bête qui manges les moutons*;" but many others, given in patois, require rendering to be understood, such, for instance, as the following: "Show up and fight, you great bony cadger." "Come out and pay the dogs, you mangy thief." "Fire his tail, the carrion howler." "Out with him, burn him, poke his ribs; ah, the eternal vermin! Ah! the unclean beast." "Peuh, the son of a polecat, how he stinks!" This last compliment alludes to the wolf's offensive odour, which, as Buffon remarks, is truly disgusting, and which issues with overpowering strength from any place he may have occupied for several successive days. The wolf meanwhile remains insensible to the abuse of his persecutors. A mortal fear detains him, and in spite of the terrific din around his lair, he lies close and immovable within a few yards of the enemy. Sometimes, when the woods are too dry to permit of the use of fire, it becomes necessary to probe the thicket with sticks and pitchforks; but in times of moisture, the men make powder-paste balls and throw them lighted into the wolf's retreat. This method, if well employed, soon dislodges him. The intent posture of the dogs prepares the spectators for a sudden bolt, and the next instant the wolf dashes through the ring, and becoming entangled in the nets, the scene closes in confusion, amidst stifled groans and hard breathing. The conduct of the dogs is peculiar; the small ones howl strangely, hiding their tails and trembling with convulsion. The large ones appear transported with a kind of rabid ecstasy, their jaws grind and chop, their eyes become wild and bloodshot, and their hair bristles on all their limbs. When once, however, the dogs have fairly killed the wolf, they refuse to touch his dead body. Not so the men; these thump and fork the

carcass until the skin becomes utterly worthless for the furrier, and nothing remains in the way of profit but the small premium claimable at the Mairie. A cord is then attached to the poor animal's hind legs, by which he is traileed home in triumph, and the money received from the mayor, augmented by donations solicited from door to door, is spent in drunken revelry over his mutilated remains.

Unlike the fox, the wolf, when overpowered by numbers, becomes cowed and dies meekly. A wolf, surrounded in the way we have described, suffers himself to be killed by the dogs without exhausting his strength in the struggle. But woe to the luckless cur that meets him alone in the forest, unless of a size to inspire respect, or of strength to exact it. The wolf takes kindly to dog's-flesh, notwithstanding the dog's horror of wolf's-flesh; and when, rendered bold by hunger, the wolf approaches the village, his lure is not so much the farm live-stock, which he knows to be well guarded, as the stray cur whom he hopes to find at large and unprotected. In some parts of Europe scarcely a winter passes without a visit from the wolves, and the smaller dogs are nearly always the first victims. Sweeping suddenly through the village at dusk or daybreak, they snap up and bear off without stopping some howling mongrel unable to get out of their way in time. Sometimes a poor cat disappears in the same manner; not unfrequently a fowl or a goose, and sometimes even a child. Later in the season, when the cold grows more intense, the wolves arrive in larger parties. Their visits are usually made before day-break, when they may be heard pawing and scraping in the rubbish, and sniffing under all the doorways. At the same time the dogs of the village begin to howl and whine in concert, the peculiar noise they make on such occasions resembling nothing they make at any other time. The villagers of the Aube call it "*le réveil au loup*," and well understand its import. No sooner is the alarm heard than each one hastens to take the precautions he deems most needful—one flying to protect his pigs, another to unhang his fire-lock, in the hope of coming in for a shot from an open window.

At Clemency, on the borders of Switzerland, a wolf towards nightfall entered the village, and immediately gave chase to a small grey terrier belonging to no one in particular. Instead of taking shelter in the nearest cottage, the dog rushed on to the end of the hamlet, and, entering a wheelwright's yard, leapt safe and sound into the kennel of a huge mastiff. The wolf had followed too closely to recede, and the mastiff, in spite of a heavy chain that cramped his movements, darted out suddenly and seized the wolf by the skin of the back. The sequel was remarkable. The mastiff, impeded by his chain, began to yield to the struggles of the wolf, which was a full-grown powerful beast, when, just at the right moment, another large dog arrived at full speed, accompanied by the little terrier, who had evidently seen his comrade's need of assistance, and gone off to procure it. This

unexpected ally put an end to the conflict, and the wolf was speedily mastered. Madame Bastide,—the wheelwright's wife,—her daughter, and servant—all three witnessed the scene, which they each describe as related; and indeed there is nothing in the story incredible, many parallels having occurred to illustrate the intelligence of animals in comprehending a position of urgency, as well as the facilities they possess for making known to each other their wants and wishes.

Wolves grow desperate in the extremities of hunger. They then assemble in troops, and, from their disregard of their own lives, become dangerous even to men. Instances have also occurred where men have been attacked by wolves at other times. A single wolf has been even known to attack a man in open daylight. But these must be regarded as rare exceptions, the natural movement of the wolf being to hide at the approach of man; and more excursionists than one, anxious to observe him in his native woods, have been disappointed by hearing him howl unseen within fifty yards of the footpath. It nevertheless occurs in hard winters that parties of wolves allow men to pass them without attempting to fly or caring to deviate from their route. In such cases it might be dangerous to molest them; but if not interfered with, they pursue their way without betraying fear, or appearing to notice the traveller. A merchant of Cette, in crossing the landes of the Gironde, accompanied by a maquignon or horse-dealer, fell in with a party of seven wolves, attentively engaged in examining the skeleton of a mule. The merchant felt afraid to pass, but his companion was able from experience to assure him there was no danger. He had before encountered wolves in the same neighbourhood, and never observed in them the slightest disposition to be aggressive. At night there would be more risk, and it might be imprudent after sunset to cross the landes alone. But whether by night or day a man, travelling alone, must be careful to keep his feet; for should he fall the wolves would be on him immediately, and a man once down, and fairly pinned by wolves, would have small chance of escaping with his life.

A letter-carrier, travelling from village to village across the mountains of the Côte-d'Or, fell in from time to time with parties of wolves in his winter journeys. On such occasions he looked straight before him, and walked on without appearing to notice them; till at length, finding the animals passed him with perfect unconcern, he grew quite used to the danger of meeting them, and it ceased to make him uneasy. Once, however, on turning his head to observe three wolves that were ascending the heights in an opposite direction, his foot slipped on the frozen snow, and losing his balance, he fell with force on his back at full length. In an instant the wolves were down upon him, and he was only rescued from his peril by the providential approach of the Châlons diligence, which appeared opportunely on the nearest height, and frightened the animals away.

The sheep is usually regarded as the natural prey of the wolf; the consequence is, that all sorts of precautions are taken to prevent the two animals coming in contact, and accordingly few wolves get a chance of tasting mutton during the whole course of their lives. The flocks are guarded day and night by dogs, and the shepherds, in lieu of flutes, are provided with powerful horns, the sound of which reverberates from hill to hill, causing terrific noise, and effectually scaring beasts of prey. In very severe weather, when cold and hunger urge the wolf to desperation, the flocks are conducted home and penned within sight of the farmer's habitation. Pigs are looked after with less care, and are more often killed by wolves. Cows and bullocks, in spite of their horns, are occasionally attacked and overpowered. The horse, so long as he confront the wolf, is able to defend himself with his forefeet; but should he once turn tail his fate is certain. The wolf leaps on his back, and seizing him behind the head, holds on suspended until the horse drops from pain and exhaustion. A single wolf in this manner will destroy a horse, and it would follow that no horse could long defend itself when attacked by several wolves together. Wolves make war equally on mules and asses; but these, and especially the latter, are extremely dexterous in the use of their forefeet. An ass, attacked by a single wolf, tramples him down without difficulty. A person of credibility relates that a she-ass was attacked one winter by a wolf while grazing within sight of a cantonnier's cottage. The ass held her head to the ground, and kept closely following the movements of the wolf, which was endeavouring to get behind her. This continued for some time, till the ass, raising herself suddenly on her hind legs, struck down the wolf with her two front feet, and killed him on the spot. She then made sure of her advantage by trampling on the carcass, which she did with such force as to break in the ribs and crush the skull to pieces.

Wolves have been asserted to be practically omnivorous; but the assertion is unfounded, inasmuch as they use as medicine, and consequently not as food, both grass and vetch, and further, when driven from the woods by famine they leave behind them many substances which omnivorous animals would utilise. But if not capable of digesting quite everything, wolves must be admitted, for tone and power, to possess enviable stomachs. Buffon informs us they have been known to feed on dried skins covered with lime; but a stronger fact is mentioned by a manufacturer in the south of France, who asserts that on his own premises they have sometimes devoured the refuse of an artificial manure prepared with oil of turpentine from some kind of liquid putrefaction.

In the conformation of the wolf the most striking feature is the size of the teeth and jaw bones, as well as the great strength of the neck, which is both bony and muscular. These parts are much larger and stronger than in a dog of the same size and weight, and yet such a

dog would more than match the wolf in equal fight. This superiority of the dog may perhaps be accounted for by his courage and self-reliance, qualities in which the wolf is conspicuously wanting. A modern writer gives an account of a fight which took place some time ago between a wolf and a dog at a place of popular entertainment in one of the suburbs of Paris. The dog in this case was the smaller animal, but as the wolf had been for some days in captivity, the dog's inferiority in size was probably compensated by his sense of freedom, and by the fact of his being in better health and training. The dog, although held in leash within sight of the wolf, showed no particular eagerness to begin the fight. On being released, however, he went straight up and attacked him resolutely, but without any of those demonstrations of implacable hostility which we have shown that dogs exhibit when attacking wolves in their wild state. The wolf fought desperately, and appeared at one time to be actually getting the advantage, when the dog, encouraged by the shouts of the spectators, succeeded in tearing off a strip of flesh which was hanging from the wolf's shoulder. The wolf on this began to lose heart, and by degrees giving in, was at last fairly strangled in a final and decisive struggle. The dog's victory was, nevertheless, rather glorious than gainful, as his own skin was badly torn, and the entire front part of his body presented a mass of pink and angry flesh.

The flesh of the wolf may be taken certainly to be about the rankest carrion in creation, not even excepting that of the common vulture and the turkey-buzzard. Yet all this in reality is less fact than imagination. M. Charles Gauthey, a well-known sportsman in the Côte-d'Or, relates that the landlord of a country inn, himself a sportsman, and wishing to play the brethren a confraternal trick—or as it is called in French, *leur jouer un tour de chasseur*,—had a piece of wolf's flesh cut into small square morsels, and stewed up with veal and mutton cut into pieces of a different shape. The landlord helped the ragout himself, and being careful to serve each guest with one of the square morsels, was enabled to inform them after dinner that they had all been eating wolf. Two of the guests were thereupon seized with horror, and one to such a degree that he was compelled to retire from the table with precipitation. The others took the joke in good part, and one and all declared they had detected nothing in the dish to excite suspicion in the least degree.

De Foe makes his hero say of a bird he had shot, resembling a hawk, that its flesh "was carrion and good for nothing." Perhaps if Robinson Crusoe had taken the trouble to pluck this bird and roast it, he would have found it at least equal to crow, which passes easily for rook in a well-made pie; it could scarcely have been worse than wolf.

## PRIVATE THEATRICALS, OLD AND NEW.

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THE most pleasant of the known pastimes of society has always been what are called Private Theatricals. When well done,—that is, when there is a good play and good actors,—there is nothing so elegant or amusing. But at present the private histrionic stage shares in the decay of its greater sister, and to be asked out to see amateurs play some noisy, and too familiar farce, gives promise of anything but an agreeable evening. The truth is, there is always a fatal mistake made in the class of pieces chosen, and amateurs will drag on to their contracted little boards something that is in keeping with the great and promiscuous audience of a large theatre,—something that extorts the loud “guffaw” of the groundlings, and the simper,—under protest,—of the stalls. For all these broad effects and rough jokes are required distance, space, publicity; taken into the drawing-room, the whole becomes dwarfed, and inconsistent, and no effort of human imagination, even in the warmest “friend of the family” present, can see in the front drawing-room, and the shifts which cannot hide the cornices, &c., anything like a railway station, or a street in Venice, or a forest. What is wanted is elegant acting of the French pattern,—a little mental equivocation, so airy and delicate that it makes us forget the intrusive cornice and other drawbacks, and think only of the delightful copy of the great human drama which is going on before us. But this art is not with us, nor indeed, of us. The wonderful French have it all to themselves. And somehow the best translations cannot bring with them the light French bloom and airiness.

The old private stage has glories of its own like the old public one. A history of private theatricals would be very amusing and sparkling. We should see half the nobility masquerade before us, in bag wig and puce-coloured coats. What the private stage was about one hundred years ago and what it is now, can be shown by a comparison. Only a short time ago, the amateurs of our time reached the summit of their ambition, that is the height of publicity, by taking a theatre, admitting the public at fixed charges, and keeping the house open for a short season. This is certainly developing the amateur element as far as it can well go, and the line that separates it from professional work might seem a very faint one. In reality it was broader than ever: for a real theatre, and real prices, and a real public, do not make the professional actor, more than, according to the old proverb, does the cowl make the monk. The



entertainment chosen by the noble and simple amateurs was in keeping with the refined canons which now obtain, and the pun, the rhyme, the comic song, the universal slang, varied with fitful flashes of common sober prose, the break-down, the absurd dress, the grotesque disfiguring of face, all went on in the usual fashion,—of course, in an infinite degree behind the powers of the professionals; for good dancing and effective comic-song singing, and really good burlesque mumming, require much training and practice. Genteel and easy acting, where there are any natural gifts, are more easy of attainment,—or, at least, humbler merits will pass muster.

But gay as is the present tone of society in England, it would almost seem as though there was a greater enjoyment and relish of pleasure in the last century. Now a days, excitement,—a metaphorical dram drinking and opium eating,—gambling on horse races, show, display in dress and magnificence, a struggle for position among the elect and select, which is natural when wealth has become so diffused, have taken the place of mere physical enjoyments. Fifty or hundred years ago, people sought pleasure for itself; it was the aim of most to contribute something to the amusement of society; every young man tried to get the reputation of “being a young fellow of parts,” or “an ingenious young gentleman,” according to the old phrase, and could turn his copy of verses to his mistress’s eyebrow, or make an epigram on the slipper Lady D—— lost at the ball last night. Then, too, we had the graceful publicity of the minuet, the old formality of politeness exaggerated and quaint, the dramatic elements of duelling, the more dramatic costume, and the romance of what were gently termed amours. A good deal of all this taste was owing to the difficulties of travel, which confined people to their own districts. Even now we can hear old people telling what country towns were in their day,—how gay, how pleasant, what balls in that old street, what fiddling, what dancing! Now the railway, which was to “make” the town, as it was fondly hoped, has only served to draw off the trade and traffic to the greater town twenty miles away, and all the orders and the goods fly express by this hungry place, to enrich its greedy enemy.

A great pastime of these pleasant days was PRIVATE THEATRICALS. We are stagey enough at present, and amateur acting is diligently plied in all corners of the kingdom. This is but part of the existing rage for publicity, and every one is longing for some opportunity, either at the private concert, or the penny reading, or in the large drawing-room, to exhibit his or her gifts, and compete with others. But the amateur players of our day are mere journeymen compared with those of the past century. Long ago private acting was established on a solid and even magnificent scale. It was the favourite diversion of noblemen. It was chiefly in their hands; and certainly under such patronage it might be presented under the best



conditions. Magnificence at least, can make up for certain deficiencies. All the annals of amusement, in the past century, teem with accounts of this graceful and elegant shape of entertainment, in which the Royal family even took their part.

But it was in Ireland that the art became a sort of passion or craze, and was developed with something that approached magnificence. The amusements of Dublin, a hundred years ago,—its Court, shows, concerts, balls, and theatres,—have been described in the latest of theatrical biographies. It was a perfect city of Sybarites. It so continued until the end of the century, when the Union came, which, however beneficial in a political view, had an ill effect on the prosperity of the capital, and ended these high jinks for ever. Noblemen of the day built great palaces there in the Palladian style, and in each of these was sure to be a theatre. Even now, Aldborough House,—a place whose name is the best advertised in the world, and known to every nation, and to even recondite tongues,—stands dismantled, turned into a barrack, yet is flanked by its two handsome wings or annexes, joined by corridors to the main building. One of these was the chapel, the other the private theatre. Its noble owner was far in advance of his day in theatrical arrangements. At his country place, he kept his own theatrical carpenter and tailor. He got the Duke of York's own private artist to design his stage and theatre, and to paint scenery. He had three side-scenes for "Street, Grove, and Chamber," and no less than twelve "flats," two rooms, one garden, one prison, one rialto, one rural, one palace, one camp, one library. This was really handsome, and with such resources he might justifiably be enthusiastic. The Irish gentlemen were passionately fond of acting, studied it carefully, sometimes became real actors themselves, delighted in the company of professionals, and held them in the highest honour.

The most important of the Irish amateur performances were the Kilkenny theatricals, a series that went on for seventeen years, from 1802 to 1819. This spirited and well sustained attempt,—continuing so long,—was of a very high order, and was certainly the best and most successful of any amateur performances anywhere. The festivals were held in the town of Kilkenny, when the old castle of the Ormondes was filled, and the little place itself, for six weeks, from a dull country town, was changed into a sort of gay and glittering settlement, the streets filled with grand equipages, with noble ladies and gentlemen, with long processions going out to ride, and with all the rank, beauty, or wit, in the country. The theatre was elegant, and no expense was spared. The gentlemen took good care that they should be supported by the best actresses that could be procured, and that these actresses should be paid liberal salaries. These ladies were of such mark as Miss Walstein, Mrs. Bartley, Miss Stephens, and, above all, Miss O'Neil. They were treated and honoured as

guests, and three of them made distinguished marriages. The greatest of them is now alive, and could tell the story of these old days.

The record of those pleasant festivals has been printed in a handsome quarto volume, and it is indeed a record of all that is witty and brilliant. The gentlemen actors were surprisingly good. Some of them obtained reputations beyond the cheaper one of the histrionic amateur, and Sir Wrixon Becher was pronounced by great actors of the day to be certain of success on any boards. This might have been more than the conventional compliment which the friends of every eminent amateur repeat for him,—"that Crummles had guaranteed him ten guineas a week if he would go on the stage;" for these gentlemen had many years' diligent practice, through two or three months in each year, to say nothing of the instruction and encouragement of good actresses. Mr. Lyster's Lord Ogleby was considered admirable. Mr. Becher's Iago and Coriolanus vigorous and tremendous. Mr. Crampton, brother to the Crampton who so delighted Walter Scott, was said to be the best Sir Lucius O'Trigger on the stage; and one of his points, which an eye-witness recollected and described to Mr. Cole, shows a refinement that would escape most players of the traditional Irishman. It was when he said, "Faith, Mr. Acres, I believe you are little better than a coward." The phrase was given doubtfully, as if a new and unexpected solution was breaking in on him, before ludicrously remote and almost out of nature. This is very happy. But who has seen on the modern stage even a respectable Sir Lucius—or one that was not odious, vulgar, low, and repulsive? The gentlemanly Irishman is the hardest of all parts to play.

About forty years before there had been theatricals at Lurgan, in the north, for which Kane O'Hara wrote his capital "Midas." Two years later, in 1761, at Carton, the seat of the Duke of Leinster, was given the "Beggars' Opera," with a cast that included the well-known Captain Morris, of song-writing memory, Lord Charlemont, Lady Louisa Connolly, Lady Powercourt, with a real Dean of the Established Church in the part of Lockit. The reverend and diaconal player, however, apologized oddly in a lively prologue:—

"Lockit himself his knav'ry shall resign,  
And lose the gaoler in the dull divine."

At another house, Grattan and Flood played together in Macduff and Macbeth,—a curious anticipation of the inveterate hostility of these two combatants, on other boards. Grattan wrote the epilogue of another dramatic performance at Marley Abbey, near Dublin, which Lady Lanesborough spoke, after the performance of "Comus." Think of their choosing such a piece at any country house now! The droll Flipper, who almost makes a livelihood, and secures board and lodging at a good many houses, by his histrionic wits, how he would

laugh at such a choice ! It would seem as though the audiences of those days had a more refined taste.

A long list could be made out of similar performances. In Dublin, there is a gloomy street near St. Stephen's Green, called Ely Place, in one of whose houses the Countess of Ely had a theatre, in rooms up at the top of the house, which the wits promptly dubbed "The Attic Theatre." But another most important series of Irish performances was the one given at the old music hall in 1793, in Fishamble Street,—a fine building in Lord Burlington's style, where Handel had accompanied his "Messiah" long before, in the very year that Garrick was playing at Smock Alley. It was under the direction of Lord Westmeath and a Mr. Jones. The whole performance was arranged in sumptuous style. The amateurs spared no expense, and actually re-modelled the house. It was laid out in three divisions, with a pit, boxes, and lattices. The pilasters which supported the boxes were gorgeous with gold, and mirrors,—then a very costly shape of decoration,—and the seats were fashioned on the principle of our present stalls. The draperies of the boxes were fringed with gold, and looped up with gold cords and tassels. There was always this sumptuousness in the festive arrangements of the "good old times." Caryatides supported the various galleries ; and Valdio, one of the many Italian artists whom Irish noblemen brought over to decorate their mansions, and whose exquisite stucco still embroiders many a Dublin ceiling, was employed to paint the whole. The ceiling glowed with a gorgeous apotheosis ; and a drop curtain—a temple with clouds, and Tragedy, and Comedy, and Apollo and his lyre, displayed the hospitable motto in a "glory"—"FOR OUR FRIENDS." As an eye-witness said, "so splendid, tasteful, and beautiful a theatre for the size is not in the three Kingdoms ; and indeed, I never saw anything comparable with it on the continent." The subscribers poured in—the highest in the land competed for places. On the nights of performances, the sight was, according to the hackneyed phrase, like Fairy Land ; ranks of lovely Irish ladies filling the seats, accompanied by distinguished men, of whom there were many in Dublin then. Servants in gorgeous liveries attended about the boxes, and on the stage, to obey the orders of the guests, or as the quaint account says "to accommodate the company." The opening night was in March, 1793, when the "Beggar's Opera," and Garrick's "Irish Widow" were played. Captain Ashe, Captain Browne, Mr. Lyster, Lord Thurles, Buck Whaley, and Lord Cunningham took parts. In "The Poor Soldier," Lord Westmeath's Father Luke became so popular, that his lordship's head, like that of Lofty, was stuck in the print-shops, and he was seen in character in many a popular magazine. Even this little fact gives us a hint of what popular taste was then. That histrionic nobleman would have been a little surprised at some unhistrionic freaks of a noble descendant of his. These sports went on for three years, but the upas-tree of the Union was

already spreading its fatal branches. In three years more, the curtains descended upon all these festivities, the great palaces were deserted and sold. In a single coachmaker's yard were lying, during one month, in 1801, nearly one hundred "coaches" of noblemen and gentlemen, all flying from what was no longer a capital.

The taste for private theatricals still survives. At every garrison town the officers give their plays, though there is no connection between soldiering and histrionics. In Dublin, there are dramatic societies, and many private houses, where there is the yearly play. During the reign of the late Lord Carlisle, always a patron of refined "divarshion," there were many of these performances; and people recall the pleasant evenings when the Viceroy went in state, and the pretty theatre was filled with a bright company, and the state box glittered with colours and beauty, and the new piece, written for the occasion, and "got up" with new scenery and dresses was played. There were other nights of a more private sort, when the genial "Lord Deputy" played himself, and played with spirit and humour.

We pass now to the English private stage, which has many glories of its own. Walpole, of course, furnishes much to the chronicle; but the brilliant letter-writer has been so drawn upon,—so cut up and extracted from,—that he has become almost too familiar, and to to quote his reminiscences is merely going over ground that has been trodden and re-trodden, driven over with a traffic that has worn it into ruts. There are pictures not quite so familiar. As a pendant for the Dublin sketch of Lord Westmeath's theatricals, we may give a more famous one which took place at Drury Lane a century ago, and a description of which we may take from the recent "*Life of Garrick*," before alluded to. Garrick complaisantly, or "with great politeness," as it would have been phrased then, gave up his fine theatre to the noble amateurs. "Such interest and curiosity was excited by this performance, that the House of Commons adjourned at three o'clock to attend early. The Delaval family,—men about town, bitten with a craze for acting,—had performed '*Othello*' at Lord Mexborough's, and were fired with a desire for a larger field of action. In those days even a small theatre would have been sufficient publicity, but to venture on the large expense of the Drury Lane stage seemed almost too daring. Garrick, one of whose little weaknesses was an inclination to favour anything associated with persons of quality, interrupted his regular performances and allowed his theatre to be used for the night. Never was there such magnificence. No expense was spared. The distinctions of pit and gallery were abolished, and all parts of the house shone indifferently with laces and jewels and costly dresses. Even in the footmen's gallery it was noticed that half a dozen stars were glittering; every part of the house overflowed with the best 'quality' in London; the Royal princes and some German ones,—rarely absent from any Court show in England,—were in the side boxes. All

these glories were lit up by the soft effulgence of waxlights. On the stage there were fresh scenes and new and gorgeous dresses. The music was excellent. The scene outside the playhouse is described to have been almost ludicrous from the confusion and block of chairs and coaches, which impeded each other from getting near the door; and the mob were delighted at seeing the fine ladies and gentlemen picking their steps through the mud and filth. Even at the mean public-houses close by, lords, in stars and garters and silk stockings, were seen waiting until the street should clear a little." The great actor himself was often invited to take part in private performances; but there was only one house which he seems to have thus favoured,—that of Sir Watkyn Wynne. The theatricals at Wynnestay were a regular series, and held for many years. There was a great festival, and the Welsh inns for thirty miles around were filled to overflowing. They lasted for six weeks; and the house was filled with the best English company,—sometimes thirty people were staying there. It was a place that Garrick always turned to with affection. Just before his death he seems to have meditated a visit down there, and there is preserved among his papers a draught of a prologue which he meant to have spoken himself. The theatre was always fitted up in the kitchen, which was a spacious hall; and it had this excellent feature, which might be well considered in modern theatres,—that there were no 'floats,' as they used to be called, or footlights, as they are known to us, but the scenery and performers were lit up by a row of lights behind an arch, which ran across the stage high over their heads. The rehearsals were conducted on diligent principles of sound hard work, the mornings being devoted to good practice and drilling. The performers had the advantage of the assistance of the two Colmans, father and son,—the elder being stage manager. The servants of the house were pressed into the service, to fill parts like the ones they played in real life. The butler was a little awkward, and could not be got to present a sword with freedom or naturally,—a more difficult thing than might be supposed. Colman lost patience, and when the man asked "how he was to do it," answered him, "Why just as you gave a gravy spoon to Sir Watkyn at dinner yesterday. I noticed you!" Other members of the company were the lively and facetious Bunbury, and "Bob Alderseys," who had the pleasant reputation among his friends "of being so like Garrick in his playing." More competent judges, however, pronounced that this likeness did not go beyond a certain "punchiness," to which Garrick inclined in his later days; but in other respects,—*"Alas, alas!"* says the reporter. Among the amateur corps of the present days, there is always some one indulgently considered to be "like Kean or Wigan," or some other artist of equal eminence.

The Wargrave theatricals held at one time a very prominent place,

owing to some tolerable acting, but chiefly to the eccentric festivities with which the entertainer used to accompany the dramatic performances. This was the well-known Lord Barrymore, whose oddities were the talk as well as amusement of the house. What such a character had to do in that elegant "gallery" of histrionics seems a mystery; but there can be no doubt the acting was good, and that every one was eager to get to Wargrave.

There were other inducements. The company assembled there was of the strangest sort. Lord Barrymore had two aides on his staff,—chief jesters as it were,—whose duty it was to "keep the fun going." One was the younger Edwin, the actor,—the other the well-known Antony Pasquin; and these fellows of infinite jest did not allow the sport to languish. The Prince of Wales of the day would come down to see these shows, stopping with a Mr. Hill in the neighbourhood. This honour stimulated fresh exertions; and it was recollected how young Mr. Blackstone, son of the commentator, lying in bed after a roys-tering night, had suddenly roused himself, and, tying a wet towel about his heated head, wrote a prologue under such difficult conditions. On the "off-nights," the scenes of riot and revelry were amusing, and the company resolved itself into what was called the Bothering Club, whose humours were something of this sort. Guests were allowed,—or rather invited with a suspicious eagerness,—to bring with them any "friend" whom they fancied; and often some simple honest fellow was thus seduced, from curiosity, into this strange company, for the purpose of being "smoked" or "roasted." A Mr. Benson, perhaps, would be the name of the guest, an honest merchant; and his friend and introducer would slip out suddenly. Another guest, entering, would see Mr. Benson, and, with overjoyed surprise, would call out, "Ah, Higginbottom! So glad to see you!" The guest would repudiate this title; but, in about ten minutes, another guest entered, and again saluted the visitor with all the delight of recognition. "Higginbottom!—you down here!" The guest, indignant and amazed, and even confounded, now begins to protest loudly, but has yet uneasy suspicions of his own identity. The attention of the company is drawn, and then the host and Antony Pasquin interfere, with grave looks. Mr. Benson gets into a dispute with Mr. Pasquin, and the host says, gravely, "that it seems a very strange transaction,—your friend appears to have left—" Everybody takes part in the discussion; one tells him that he is "smoked," and that "it won't do;" and the hapless victim is well-nigh driven frantic. The same game is pursued every night with other butts. Sometimes Mr. Pasquin gets up a dispute with another guest, and discomposes him, with some such speech as: "I could expect anything from a man of your habits." "What do you mean, Sir,—what do you insinuate?" "I appeal to the company," says Pasquin. "What must be thought of a man who shaves himself every morning with the

razor his wife cut her throat with?" The scene that followed may be conceived.

The Royal family during the last century were inclined to theatrical amusement. Mr. Quin, who was warmly patronized by Frederick, Prince of Wales, was once honoured, in 1759, by being invited to superintend a performance of "Cato" "by the younger branches of the Royal family." Mr. Quin was all for the open vowels, and we may be sure told his august pupils to say, "It must be so,—Katto, thou reasonest well,"—for such was the affectation adopted by him and Mr. Sheridan. His Majesty George III. spoke the prologue. The Duke of York (Prince Edward), who was half mad after pleasure, played on the bass-viol, and himself acted with the Delavals. Not long after, he was to end all his fiddling and histrionics, and die in a foreign country of a cold caught "from excessive dancing." This seems an absurd way in which to leave a pleasant world. But, on the whole, the English royal family have never done much in the way of private theatricals, and have been completely passed, in the histrionic race, by the royal personages of foreign countries. French memoirs actually teem with records of these pleasant pastimes; and from the days of Louis XIV. to our own, the succession is almost unbroken. With us the thing is in rather a raw and rude state, and a little august patronage would do much to elevate the standard, which is at present low indeed.

One of the most indefatigable of amateur actors was "Mr. J. Cradock," who has left some amusing memoirs,—well larded with praises of himself and of his performances. He contrived to hang on by the skirts of Goldsmith, and Garrick, and Johnson, and has very much the air of a water-colour Boswell. His greatest honour was his blundering into a place of distinction, and through a sort of accident, or, perhaps, by Goldsmith's good-nature, succeeding in getting an epilogue tacked to one of the poet's comedies. He wrote plays himself, with which he persecuted managers and actors, but could not get them accepted. He was a sort of professional amateur,—having "engagements" at this country-house and that. For one proposed scheme he deserves our thanks; he had very nearly got up that dramatic performance at Lichfield in which Garrick and Goldsmith were to have played. He contrived, also, to extort good-natured praise from Garrick, who even promised to play the Ghost to his Hamlet; but the death of the great actor put a stop to this plan. Mr. Cradock said that Garrick had actually stipulated that the amateur was to support him; "that he might have some one to depend on." "I must say," he adds, "Garrick spoke with great satisfaction of my acting." This amateur fluttered about England, getting engagements; but his chief theatre was at Kelmarsh Hall, the seat of Mr. Hanbury, where theatricals were got up with all magnificence. They there secured Mr. Garrick's nephew, David Garrick, who played



Prinli, and whom Mr. Cradock had the satisfaction of "making up," as it is called, for the part. And it was considered that, with the grey locks and general elderly air, he presented a most surprising likeness of the uncle. There was the finest company,—the Duke of Dorset and others,—and the scenery was by Dahl,—a well-known artist of the day. At Cassiobury, Lord Essex's seat, the indefatigable Cradock was also "engaged." The famous Lord Coleraine was to have played Count Basset, but he quarrelled with his host and manager. Garrick, also, was to have been there, but was deeply hurt at the behaviour of the noble host, whom he had complimented by specially "putting-up" his great part of Hastings at Drury Lane, in obedience to an earnest request. With a carelessness which was rather a characteristic of the noblemen of that day, Lord Essex and his party did not arrive at the theatre until the piece was more than half over, being detained by a dinner-party. The Cassiobury theatricals thus lost an honoured and important spectator. But Lord North was present; and into prologue or epilogue were introduced allusions of a politico-complimentary sort, which brought down great applause. Mr. Cradock did wonders,—playing in everything, and finally giving imitations of the London performers. Just as the distinguished party was going in to supper, an unfortunate messenger, who had ridden up, was thrown from his horse at the door, and falling on his head on the ice, was killed. With a tact for which he was gratefully thanked by the host next day, Mr. Cradock had the man carried out of the way somewhere. Lord North and his fine company were thus happily kept in ignorance, and enjoyed their supper very much.

In 1777 Lord Villiers opened a new theatre near Henley-on-Thames, and gave the "Provoked Husband" and a little French after-piece. Lord Malden was Count Basset, the host himself Lord Townly, and the other characters were filled by Mr. Miles, Mr. Turge, the Hon. Mr. Onslow, and many more. A prologue was spoken by Lord Villiers, and it is characteristic to find how at all times these introductions have been couched in the same strain of affected humility and pretended trepidation:—

"But now, alas! the case is altered quite,  
When such an audience opens on the sight;  
Garrick himself in such a situation,  
Though sure to please, might feel some palpitation.  
Our anxious breasts no such presumption cheers,  
Light are our hopes, but weighty are our fears."

Who has not heard these well-meant platitudes, even to "the case is altered quite;" and we almost expect that the appeal to "kind friends" will follow, and an entreaty to "give but your applause." The reporters were admitted, and dealt not merely indulgently, but even rapturously with these noble efforts. The Court newsman then



dared not be free or irreverent with the distinguished. Lord Townly was "admirable both as to voice, figure, action, and elocution,—easy, animated, and graceful; and perhaps the character never appeared to more advantage in the hands of any performer, except Mr. Barry." One fault indeed might be found: he was not enough displeased at his lady's conduct. But this is explained by an elegant compliment to the noble lady of the house, "who never gives him reason to practise it; and without practice it was impossible to be feigned, when the enchanting Miss Hodges was smiling before his eyes." Mr. Turge was far superior to Messrs. Yates or Macklin, and it would be for the advantage of the London managers if they engaged him at once. It was a pity that Lord Malden, who played Count Basset, was not "less delicate in his principles," as it required a more unprincipled person to do justice to the character. Squire Richard was so good, that it almost seemed as though Lord Villiers had engaged one of his own rustics to do the part. Miss Hodges was "incomparable . . . it is but common justice to say that she performed her part in a style far superior to anything we have ever seen in the theatres. The beauty of her face, the melody of her voice, the elegance of her person, her eyes amazingly expressive, her easy yet graceful deportment, were such as have never been united in any female who was an actress by profession." Miss Harvey seemed to show her stage children "such truly maternal affection, as makes one regret she had none of her own." The secret of all this contentment is presently disclosed. "After the play Lord Villiers entertained the company with a most elegant and sumptuous supper and a ball. There was a profusion of the choicest wines and most exquisite viands; and the most polite attention was paid to every person present."

One of the features of our time is the unbounded taste for acting amongst all ranks; that is, for learning a number of speeches by heart,—dressing up fantastically,—laying colour on the face,—and standing behind a line of lamps placed upon the floor. Something more seems to be required; but, in most instances, these seem sufficient credentials. The whole custom, it is to be feared, may be but a department of an alarming development of vanity,—the craving for some share of public attention. Music,—that is, playing or singing,—might seem at first sight to promise equal advantages, at less trouble; but, as is well known, music,—when a gentleman or lady favours us with song or piece,—is but the signal for agreeable intercourse and noisy conversation. During theatricals a sort of decent silence is enforced. Taking them as they are at present, they are a very agreeable shape of amusement. If well done, and directed with skill, there is nothing more elegant or entertaining. If badly organised, or "got up," as it is called, with indecent haste,—“scrambled through,” or, what is worse, “carried off” by buffoonery or gagging,—there is nothing more insupportable, more tedious, or a more outrageous

affront to a decent audience. Who does not pity the poor host who has intrusted all to the direction of Major Feebleman and his friends,—an officer to whom life is a sort of joke, and everything is “such fun!”—and who enlists young Wagtail and a few more out of his corps? The hosts, full of confidence and even enthusiasm, invite the whole county; incur prodigious outlay in carpentry, scenic work, hire of dresses, gas, &c.; which very ostentation of preparation is a challenge to public curiosity, and raises the most astounding hopes. Meanwhile the warriors have let things take their course,—have “no time to rehearse,”—there is the hunt here, the ball there,—and, besides, “never fear; when the time comes we’ll pull through, never fear.” The time does come, and perhaps the pulling through; for without any preparation at all it is possible, with the aid of dresses, &c., to go through some sort of antics to fill up time. Who has not seen some such melancholy exhibition, when the thing opened with a sort of promise, from the absurd costumes, but in which five minutes showed that all was over, the prepared resources run out, and that now dependence could only be had on ready buffoonery and sheer impudence? Between the gentlemen of the army and this private playing it seems to be understood there is a certain connection. The sock and buskin, it is supposed, come naturally to them. Having such opportunities, so much time, so much pleasure, it might be supposed they would excel in this department; yet soldiers are the worst of private players. At many a country town, when the Sixth (Du Barry’s) or the Tenth (Troubadours) take the theatre, and give “The Stranger” or “The Rose of Amiens,” we are sure of a diverting evening; when Captain McLisp, in powder and blue silk, pleads his passion to the “Rose,” Miss Annie Hiscoke, and says, standing stiff as though he were a fork stuck into the stage, and with the utmost quietness, “Lovely Marry! (Marie) I lay thith heart at your feet, whith is filled with a glowing pathion that burns only to potheth you;” or when some one else rushes in to save “Marry,” and shouting “Villain!” fiercely at him, whose designs are villanous, forgets the rest, and, standing still, repeats again more gaily “Villain!” More diverting again is often Lieutenant Vanille, who is considered very fine in tragedy, “who knows Wigan;”—how many boast their acquaintance with that excellent artist!—and works the love business up into passion and spasms of frantic fury. It is not possible to recall an evening of greater hilarity and good-humour than was furnished by such a lover, who, when he was rejected by the lady of the piece, let his head fall on the shoulder of a sympathising friend and brother officer, and thus, publicly concealed from view, produced slow and long-drawn groans of agony. Every one literally shrieked with another kind of agony—almost hysterical.

There are some surprising things in the social view of private theatricals. Almost every human creature is ready to take a part; or, at least, thinks he is capable of taking one. So that the power

of acting must be added to that other accomplishment of poking the fire or driving a gig, which every man believes he can do well. Not less surprising, too, is the way some men, with all their demerits, do contrive to "pull through." Another matter which seems surprising is that audiences,—private theatrical audiences,—should be as contented with indifferent playing as with good. This may be on the principle of not looking a gift-horse in the mouth. What is more curious still is this, that while on the regular stage the men are the better actors, taken as a whole, among amateurs, women acquit themselves infinitely better. Perhaps this may be from the same reason that on the stage of life most women can play their parts with infinitely more tact and grace than most men; and an interesting girl, with a moderate degree of ability, a modest air, and good-will, will conciliate her public, and lend a charm of elegance, a bloom of freshness, which is not found perhaps in the professional. It is to be feared, too, that this pastime engenders arrogance; it is amusing to contrast the company, their boisterous exuberance behind the scenes,—i.e., in the front drawing-room,—their almost rampant exultation, with the tranquil indifference of the audience, who begin, towards the end, to think it a little long, and are growing hungry. The "comic man," who is "carrying it all through" as he thinks, believes the eyes of Europe are on him.

It is, indeed, a most elegant pastime, and if carefully and conscientiously carried out, with that respect for the public which is only decent, would be the highest and most fascinating of all social shows. But there are pretenders and imposters abroad who are bringing the thing into disrepute. They do not care for the play, but for their own selfish vanity. Theirs is to be the one part; the rest need be but lay figures. These men, when some spirited host is willing to embark in all the risk and trouble,—in the dirt and discomfort, it may be added,—of such an enterprise, go near to shipwrecking the whole by their greed. The grand mistake is always in the choice of a play. When his grace, or his lordship,—who has a private theatre, and gets down Messrs. Nathan and other artists,—takes up the thing, it is a different concern; then the tragedy, the sensation, the rich dresses, &c., are all in keeping. But on the humbler drawing-room boards, where the guests have household reminders,—window curtains, carpets, chimney-pieces, obtruding themselves into "a street in Venice," or "the forest of Bondy,"—it is hopeless to think of theatrical effect. The scanty drawing-room will not lend itself. Judicious host, shut your ears to the selfish tempter who wants to use you and yours as a platform on which to exhibit his own buffoonery in tragedy or comedy. No. For such unpretending attempts choose pieces of one scene, and that scene laid in a drawing-room; choose a piece whose strength lies in dialogue, in elegant repartee, in pleasant equivocal; have ladies and gentlemen in the

dress of ladies and gentlemen, to be represented by ladies and gentlemen. Subject to these conditions, a little scenery will go a great way; your own natural drawing-room judiciously disposed, with a flat scene at the back, will fall in admirably. If the front room be kept in semi-darkness,—an arrangement not at all popular with young ladies,—and abundance of light disposed about what in strict courtesy you may call your stage; if you have foot-lights and side-lights, and a rod at each side with a number of tin sconces tacked on, and set upright, it is amazing what artificial brilliancy—what a theatrical air may be induced. The carpet must be got rid of as it suggests household arrangements; or a white cloth nailed down tightly over it throws out the figures of the actors with great effect.

The worst is, there are so few drawing-room pieces. The best are De Musset's elegant "Morning Call," as we know it on the English stage, and the charming "Subterfuge," as it was called when Mrs. Stirling played it, and which turns on the chapter in "Gil Blas." A more exquisite trifle than this could not be conceived; but it is amazingly difficult to play. But amateurs will play things like the eternal "Regular Fix" and "Little Toddlekins," which every one has seen at every theatre, and literally knows by heart. So with "Dearest Mamma." There are bold people who would exhume "Box and Cox" as a sort of classic, with some such speech as this,—“Oh, it is a safe thing,—always makes 'em roar, and I've played it over and over again!”—in short, the old selfishness. Scrape the amateur actor as you would a Russian, and the Tartar vanity comes through.

As for "Hamlet," "Macbeth," or "Othello," it is sheer lunacy, without benefit of the Commissioners, to attempt such things. This is generally done for the benefit of the ambitious man, who wants to "show off" in the heroes of these plays. The trouble is enormous, the expense vast, the contretemps certain. Then a long list of dramatis personæ, is unmanageable, and is unprincipled as well as unmanageable. Only the night before, Polonius is sure to write in a friendly off-hand way, that he is so sorry, "my dear fellow," he is obliged to be "off" to the country for the Pointdexter Meet, and "you can easily get some one else," or perhaps "cut him out altogether. You will pull through somehow." You are in the hands of these fellows; not they in yours, as on a real stage. How tired we grow of "Still Waters," with "Hawksley,—Captain Jenkin Waters." Hawksley is regarded with great affection. How many hunger and thirst after the "Lady of Lyons!" and the scornful Claude, who rants and defies everybody. Never could one forget this piece, and its five long acts, on a domestic stage, with a hundred and fifty persons herded in a back drawing-room, stewing, as it were, together in a sort of "pot au feu," whence there was no release,—for the hostess, economical of room, stood on guard at the narrow door, and had enrolled active young gentlemen as special constables, who "packed," as it is called,

every lady as she arrived, and forced every one to sit up close. To extricate any person would have frayed and unravelled the whole piece, upset chairs, disordered every one. Nothing short of fainting,—a desperate remedy,—could have secured release. The prostration of the last act is awful,—the exhaustion, the dull stare in old men's eyes, languor in the young girls, the indifference to Claude, and his scornful utterances, growing lower and more measured as the night wears on. He thinks the audience hanging on his lips,—one of the mysterious delusions of amateur acting. The relief when the bedroom curtains have fallen, and shut him out for ever;—this cannot be described.

The truth is, we want reform in this, as in so many things. It is being overdone, and as in music now-a-days everybody wishes to sing, and to form a society, which shall provide opportunities for being listened to, so everybody wishes to act. The difficulty is not to get actors but to get audiences. Above all, to hear plays which we have heard again and again done by good actors, mauled and mangled by inferior ones, is a dreary sort of entertainment. To sum up; if the amateur stage wishes to save itself from decay, and certainly contempt, it must first put forward what is new, so that if the acting be inferior, which it is not unlikely to be, we may have the surprise of novelty in the incident or dialogue set before us. These novelties should be either stolen from our usual victims, the French, or some of our native dramatists should try and give us new amateur pieces, written for the drawing-room. In fact, the most piquant shape of this amusement is, when the play has been written for the occasion.

It is cheaper, shorter, requires less brain, or rather no brain, to black the face, or sing the music-hall song, or "get up" Mr. Poppleton in pink trowsers, and an impossible calico coat. There must be not only cleverness and talent, but real labour, real hard work, and real grinding at rehearsal. The most remarkable amateur performances of our day were those which were connected with Mr. Dickens, and which owed their success and the delight they imparted to the audience, first, to his great dramatic talents, but in the next degree to his own untiring labour, to the conscientious industry of study and rehearsal, which made success secure.

## PHINEAS FINN, THE IRISH MEMBER.

### CHAPTER XXXIV.

#### WAS HE HONEST?

On the 10th of August, Phineas Finn did return to Loughton. He went down by the mail train on the night of the 10th, having telegraphed to the inn for a bed, and was up eating his breakfast in that hospitable house at nine o'clock. The landlord and landlady with all their staff were at a loss to imagine what had brought down their member again so quickly to his borough; but the reader, who will remember that Lady Baldock with her daughter and Violet Effingham were to pass the 11th of the month at Saulsby, may perhaps be able to make a guess on the subject.

Phineas had been thinking of making this sudden visit to Loughton ever since he had been up in town, but he could suggest to himself no reason to be given to Lord Brentford for his sudden reappearance. The Earl had been very kind to him, but he had said nothing which could justify his young friend in running in and out of Saulsby Castle at pleasure, without invitation and without notice. Phineas was so well aware of this himself that often as he had half resolved during the last ten days to return to Saulsby, so often had he determined that he could not do so. He could think of no excuse. Then the heavens favoured him, and he received a letter from Lord Chiltern, in which there was a message for Lord Brentford. "If you see my father, tell him that I am ready at any moment to do what is necessary for raising the money for Laura." Taking this as his excuse he returned to Loughton.

As chance arranged it, he met the Earl standing on the great steps before his own castle doors. "What, Finn; is this you? I thought you were in Ireland."

"Not yet, my lord, as you see." Then he opened his budget at once, and blushed at his own hypocrisy as he went on with his story. He had, he said, felt the message from Chiltern to be so all-important that he could not bring himself to go over to Ireland without delivering it. He urged upon the Earl that he might learn from this how anxious Lord Chiltern was to effect a reconciliation. When it occurred to him, he said, that there might be a hope of doing anything towards such an object, he could not go to Ireland leaving the good work behind him. In love and war all things are fair. So he declared to himself; but as he did so he felt that his story was so weak that it

would hardly gain for him an admittance into the Castle. In this he was completely wrong. The Earl, swallowing the bait, put his arm through that of the intruder, and, walking with him through the paths of the shrubbery, at length confessed that he would be glad to be reconciled to his son if it were possible. "Let him come here, and she shall be here also," said the Earl, speaking of Violet. To this Phineas could say nothing out loud, but he told himself that all should be fair between them. He would take no dishonest advantage of Lord Chiltern. He would give Lord Chiltern the whole message as it was given to him by Lord Brentford. But should it so turn out that he himself got an opportunity of saying to Violet all that he had come to say, and should it also turn out,—an event which he acknowledged to himself to be most unlikely,—that Violet did not reject him, then how could he write his letter to Lord Chiltern? So he resolved that the letter should be written before he saw Violet. But how could he write such a letter and instantly afterwards do that which would be false to the spirit of a letter so written? Could he bid Lord Chiltern come home to woo Violet Effingham, and instantly go forth to woo her for himself? He found that he could not do so, —unless he told the whole truth to Lord Chiltern? In no other way could he carry out his project and satisfy his own idea of what was honest.

The Earl bade him send to the hotel for his things. "The Baldock people are all here, you know, but they go very early to-morrow." Then Phineas declared that he also must return to London very early on the morrow;—but in the meantime he would go to the inn and fetch his things. The Earl thanked him again and again for his generous kindness; and Phineas, blushing as he received the thanks, went back and wrote his letter to Lord Chiltern. It was an elaborate letter, written, as regards the first and larger portion of it, with words intended to bring the prodigal son back to the father's home. And everything was said about Miss Effingham that could or should have been said. Then, on the last page, he told his own story. "Now," he said, "I must speak of myself:"—and he went on to explain to his friend, in the plainest language that he could use, his own position. "I have loved her," he said, "for six months, and I am here with the express intention of asking her to take me. The chances are ten to one that she refuses me. I do not deprecate your anger,—if you choose to be angry. But I am endeavouring to treat you well, and I ask you to do the same by me. I must convey to you your father's message, and after doing so I cannot address myself to Miss Effingham without telling you. I should feel myself to be false were I to do so. In the event,—the probable, nay, almost certain event of my being refused,—I shall trust you to keep my secret. Do not quarrel with me if you can help it;—but if you must I will be ready." Then he posted the letter and went up to the Castle.



He had only the one day for his action, and he knew that Violet was watched by Lady Baldock as by a dragon. He was told that the Earl was out with the young ladies, and was shown to his room. On going to the drawing-room he found Lady Baldock, with whom he had been, to a certain degree, a favourite, and was soon deeply engaged in a conversation as to the practicability of shutting up all the breweries and distilleries by Act of Parliament. But lunch relieved him, and brought the young ladies in at two. Miss Effingham seemed to be really glad to see him, and even Miss Boreham, Lady Baldock's daughter, was very gracious to him. For the Earl had been speaking well of his young member, and Phineas had in a way grown into the good graces of sober and discreet people. After lunch they were to ride;—the Earl, that is, and Violet. Lady Baldock and her daughter were to have the carriage. "I can mount you, Finn, if you would like it," said the Earl. "Of course he'll like it," said Violet; "do you suppose Mr. Finn will object to ride with me in Saulsby Woods. It won't be the first time; will it?" "Violet," said Lady Baldock, "you have the most singular way of talking." "I suppose I have," said Violet; "but I don't think I can change it now. Mr. Finn knows me too well to mind it much."

It was past five before they were on horseback, and up to that time Phineas had not found himself alone with Violet Effingham for a moment. They had sat together after lunch in the dining-room for nearly an hour, and had sauntered into the hall and knocked about the billiard balls, and then stood together at the open doors of a conservatory. But Lady Baldock or Miss Boreham had always been there. Nothing could be more pleasant than Miss Effingham's words, or more familiar than her manner to Phineas. She had expressed strong delight at his success in getting a seat in Parliament, and had talked to him about the Kennedys as though they had created some special bond of union between her and Phineas which ought to make them intimate. But, for all that, she could not be got to separate herself from Lady Baldock;—and when she was told that if she meant to ride she must go and dress herself, she went at once.

But he thought that he might have a chance on horseback; and after they had been out about half an hour, chance did favour him. For awhile he rode behind with the carriage, calculating that by his so doing the Earl would be put off his guard, and would be disposed after awhile to change places with him. And so it fell out. At a certain fall of ground in the park, where the road turned round and crossed a bridge over the little river, the carriage came up with the two first horses, and Lady Baldock spoke a word to the Earl. Then Violet pulled up, allowing the vehicle to pass the bridge first, and in this way she and Phineas were brought together,—and in this way they rode on. But he was aware that he must greatly increase the distance between them and the others of their party before he could

dare to plead his suit, and even were that done he felt that he would not know how to plead it on horseback.

They had gone on some half mile in this way when they reached a spot on which a green ride led away from the main road through the trees to the left. "You remember this place; do you not?" said Violet. Phineas declared that he remembered it well. "I must go round by the woodman's cottage. You won't mind coming?" Phineas said that he would not mind, and trotted on to tell them in the carriage.

"Where is she going?" asked Lady Baldoek; and then, when Phineas explained, she begged the Earl to go back to Violet. The Earl, feeling the absurdity of this, declared that Violet knew her way very well herself, and thus Phineas got his opportunity.

They rode on almost without speaking for nearly a mile, cantering through the trees, and then they took another turn to the right, and came upon the cottage. They rode to the door, and spoke a word or two to the woman there, and then passed on. "I always come here when I am at Saulsby," said Violet, "that I may teach myself to think kindly of Lord Chiltern."

"I understand it all," said Phineas.

"He used to be so nice;—and is so still, I believe, only that he has taught himself to be so rough. Will he ever change, do you think?"

Phineas knew that in this emergency it was his especial duty to be honest. "I think he would be changed altogether if we could bring him here,—so that he should live among his friends."

"Do you think he would? We must put our heads together, and do it. Don't you think that it is to be done?"

Phineas replied that he thought it was to be done. "I'll tell you the truth at once, Miss Effingham," he said. "You can do it by a single word."

"Yes;—yes;" she said; "but I do not mean that;—without that. It is absurd, you know, that a father should make such a condition as that." Phineas said that he thought it was absurd; and then they rode on again, cantering through the wood. He had been bold to speak to her about Lord Chiltern as he had done, and she had answered just as he would have wished to be answered. But how could he press his suit for himself while she was cantering by his side?

Presently they came to rough ground over which they were forced to walk, and he was close by her side. "Mr. Finn," she said, "I wonder whether I may ask a question?"

"Any question," he replied.

"Is there any quarrel between you and Lady Laura?"

"None."

"Or between you and him?"

"No;—none. We are greater allies than ever."

"Then why are you not going to be at Loughlinter? She has written to me expressly saying you would not be there."

He paused a moment before he replied. "It did not suit," he said at last.

"It is a secret then?"

"Yes;—it is a secret. You are not angry with me?"

"Angry; no."

"It is not a secret of my own, or I should not keep it from you."

"Perhaps I can guess it," she said. "But I will not try. I will not even think of it."

"The cause, whatever it be, has been full of sorrow to me. I would have given my left hand to have been at Loughlinter this autumn."

"Are you so fond of it?"

"I should have been staying there with you," he said. He paused and for a moment there was no word spoken by either of them; but he could perceive that the hand in which she held her whip was playing with her horse's mane with a nervous movement. "When I found how it must be, and that I must miss you, I rushed down here that I might see you for a moment. And now I am here I do not dare to speak to you of myself." They were now beyond the rocks, and Violet, without speaking a word, again put her horse into a trot. He was by her side in a moment, but he could not see her face. "Have you not a word to say to me?" he asked.

"No;—no;—no;" she replied, "not a word when you speak to me like that. There is the carriage. Come;—we will join them." Then she cantered on, and he followed her till they reached the Earl and Lady Baldoek and Miss Boreham. "I have done my devotions now," said Miss Effingham, "and am ready to return to ordinary life."

Phineas could not find another moment in which to speak to her. Though he spent the evening with her, and stood over her as she sang at the Earl's request, and pressed her hand as she went to bed, and was up to see her start in the morning, he could not draw from her either a word or a look.

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#### CHAPTER XXXV.

##### MR. MONK UPON REFORM.

PHINEAS FINN went to Ireland immediately after his return from Saulsby, having said nothing further to Violet Effingham, and having heard nothing further from her than what is recorded in the last chapter. He felt very keenly that his position was unsatisfactory, and brooded over it all the autumn and early winter; but he could form no plan for improving it. A dozen times he thought of writing

to Miss Effingham, and asking for an explicit answer. He could not, however, bring himself to write the letter, thinking that written expressions of love are always weak and vapid,—and deterred also by a conviction that Violet, if driven to reply in writing, would undoubtedly reply by a refusal. Fifty times he rode again in his imagination his ride in Saulsby Wood, and he told himself as often that the syren's answer to him,—her no, no, no,—had been, of all possible answers, the most indefinite and provoking. The tone of her voice as she galloped away from him, the bearing of her countenance when he rejoined her, her manner to him when he saw her start from the Castle in the morning, all forbade him to believe that his words to her had been taken as an offence. She had replied to him with a direct negative, simply with the word "no;" but she had so said it that there had hardly been any sting in the no; and he had known at the moment that whatever might be the result of his suit, he need not regard Violet Effingham as his enemy.

But the doubt made his sojourn in Ireland very wearisome to him. And there were other matters which tended also to his discomfort, though he was not left even at this period of his life without a continuation of success which seemed to be very wonderful. And, first, I will say a word of his discomforts. He heard not a line from Lord Chiltern in answer to the letter which he had written to his lordship. From Lady Laura he did hear frequently. Lady Laura wrote to him exactly as though she had never warned him away from Loughlinter, and as though there had been no occasion for such warning. She sent him letters filled chiefly with politics, saying something also of the guests at Loughlinter, something of the game, and just a word or two here and there of her husband. The letters were very good letters, and he preserved them carefully. It was manifest to him that they were intended to be good letters, and, as such, to be preserved. In one of these, which he received about the end of November, she told him that her brother was again in his old haunt, at the Willingford Bull, and that he had sent to Portman Square for all property of his own that had been left there. But there was no word in that letter of Violet Effingham; and though Lady Laura did speak more than once of Violet, she always did so as though Violet were simply a joint acquaintance of herself and her correspondent. There was no allusion to the existence of any special regard on his part for Miss Effingham. He had thought that Violet might probably tell her friend what had occurred at Saulsby;—but if she did so, Lady Laura was happy in her powers of reticence. Our hero was disturbed also when he reached home by finding that Mrs. Flood Jones and Miss Flood Jones had retired from Killaloe for the winter. I do not know whether he might not have been more disturbed by the presence of the young lady, for he would have found himself constrained to exhibit towards her some tenderness of manner; and any such tenderness of manner

would, in his existing circumstances, have been dangerous. But he was made to understand that Mary Flood Jones had been taken away from Killaloe because it was thought that he had ill-treated the lady, and the accusation made him unhappy. In the middle of the heat of the last session he had received a letter from his sister, in which some pushing question had been asked as to his then existing feeling about poor Mary. This he had answered petulantly. Nothing more had been written to him about Miss Jones, and nothing was said to him when he reached home. He could not, however, but ask after Mary, and when he did ask, the accusation was made again in that quietly severe manner with which, perhaps, most of us have been made acquainted at some period of our lives. "I think, Phineas," said his sister, "we had better say nothing about dear Mary. She is not here at present, and probably you may not see her while you remain with us." "What's all that about?" Phineas had demanded,—understanding the whole matter thoroughly. Then his sister had demurely refused to say a word further on the subject, and not a word further was said about Miss Mary Flood Jones. They were at Floodborough, living, he did not doubt, in a very desolate way,—and quite willing, he did not doubt also, to abandon their desolation if he would go over there in the manner that would become him after what had passed on one or two occasions between him and the young lady. But how was he to do this with such work on his hands as he had undertaken? Now that he was in Ireland, he thought that he did love dear Mary very dearly. He felt that he had two identities,—that he was, as it were, two separate persons,—and that he could, without any real faithlessness, be very much in love with Violet Effingham in his position of man of fashion and member of Parliament in England, and also warmly attached to dear little Mary Flood Jones as an Irishman of Killaloe. He was aware, however, that there was a prejudice against such fulness of heart, and, therefore, resolved sternly that it was his duty to be constant to Miss Effingham. How was it possible that he should marry dear Mary,—he, with such extensive jobs of work on his hands! It was not possible. He must abandon all thought of making dear Mary his own. No doubt they had been right to remove her. But, still, as he took his solitary walks along the Shannon, and up on the hills that overhung the lake above the town, he felt somewhat ashamed of himself, and dreamed of giving up Parliament, of leaving Violet to some noble suitor,—to Lord Chiltern, if she would take him,—and of going to Floodborough with an honest proposal that he should be allowed to press Mary to his heart. Miss Effingham would probably reject him at last; whereas Mary, dear Mary, would come to his heart without a scruple of doubt. Dear Mary! In these days of dreaming, he told himself that, after all, dear Mary was his real love. But, of course, such days were days of dreaming only. He had letters in his

pocket from Lady Laura Kennedy which made it impossible for him to think in earnest of giving up Parliament.

And then there came a wonderful piece of luck in his way. There lived, or had lived, in the town of Galway a very eccentric old lady, one Miss Marian Perse, who was the aunt of Mrs. Finn, the mother of our hero. With this lady Dr. Finn had quarrelled persistently ever since his marriage, because the lady had expressed her wish to interfere in the management of his family,—offering to purchase such right by favourable arrangements in reference to her will. This the doctor had resented, and there had been quarrels. Miss Perse was not a very rich old lady, but she thought a good deal of her own money. And now she died, leaving £3,000 to her nephew Phineas Finn. Another sum of about equal amount she bequeathed to a Roman Catholic seminary; and thus was her worldly wealth divided. “She couldn’t have done better with it,” said the old doctor; “and as far as we are concerned, the windfall is the more pleasant as being wholly unexpected.” In these days the doctor was undoubtedly gratified by his son’s success in life, and never said much about the law. Phineas in truth did do some work during the autumn, reading blue-books, reading law books, reading perhaps a novel or two at the same time,—but shutting himself up very carefully as he studied, so that his sisters were made to understand that for a certain four hours in the day not a sound was to be allowed to disturb him.

On the receipt of his legacy he at once offered to repay his father all money that had been advanced him over and above his original allowance; but this the doctor refused to take. “It comes to the same thing, Phineas,” he said. “What you have of your share now you can’t have hereafter. As regards my present income, it has only made me work a little longer than I had intended; and I believe that the later in life a man works, the more likely he is to live.” Phineas, therefore, when he returned to London, had his £3,000 in his pocket. He owed some £500; and the remainder he would, of course, invest.

There had been some talk of an autumnal session, but Mr. Mildmay’s division had at last been against it. Who cannot understand that such would be the decision of any Minister to whom was left the slightest fraction of free will in the matter? Why should any Minister court the danger of unnecessary attack, submit himself to unnecessary work, and incur the odium of summoning all his friends from their rest? In the midst of the doubts as to the new and the old Ministry, when the political needle was vacillating so tremulously on its pivot, pointing now to one set of men as the coming Government and then to another, vague suggestions as to an autumn session might be useful. And they were thrown out in all good faith. Mr. Mildmay, when he spoke on the subject to the Duke, was earnest in thinking that the question of Reform should not be postponed even for six months. “Don’t pledge yourself,” said the Duke;—and Mr.

Mildmay did not pledge himself. Afterwards, when Mr. Mildmay found that he was once more assuredly Prime Minister, he changed his mind, and felt himself to be under a fresh obligation to the Duke. Lord De Terrier had altogether failed, and the country might very well wait till February. The country did wait till February, somewhat to the disappointment of Phineas Finn, who had become tired of blue-books at Killaloe. The difference between his English life and his life at home was so great, that it was hardly possible that he should not become weary of the latter. He did become weary of it, but strove gallantly to hide his weariness from his father and mother.

At this time the world was talking much about Reform, though Mr. Mildmay had become placidly patient. The feeling was growing, and Mr. Turnbull, with his friends, was doing all he could to make it grow fast. There was a certain amount of excitement on the subject; but the excitement had grown downwards, from the leaders to the people,—from the self-instituted leaders of popular politics down, by means of the press, to the ranks of working men, instead of growing upwards, from the dissatisfaction of the masses, till it expressed itself by this mouthpiece and that, chosen by the people themselves. There was no strong throb through the country, making men feel that safety was to be had by Reform, and could not be had without Reform. But there was an understanding that the press and the orators were too strong to be ignored, and that some new measure of Reform must be conceded to them. The sooner the concession was made, the less it might be necessary to concede. And all men of all parties were agreed on this point. That Reform was in itself odious to many of those who spoke of it freely, who offered themselves willingly to be its promoters, was acknowledged. It was not only odious to Lord De Terrier and to most of those who worked with him, but was equally so to many of Mr. Mildmay's most constant supporters. The Duke had no wish for Reform. Indeed it is hard to suppose that such a Duke can wish for any change in a state of things that must seem to him to be so salutary. Workmen were getting full wages. Farmers were paying their rent. Capitalists by the dozen were creating capitalists by the hundreds. Nothing was wrong in the country, but the over-dominant spirit of speculative commerce;—and there was nothing in Reform to check that. Why should the Duke want Reform? As for such men as Lord Brentford, Sir Harry Coldfoot, Lord Plinlimmon, and Mr. Legge Wilson, it was known to all men that they advocated Reform as we all of us advocate doctors. Some amount of doctoring is necessary for us. We may hardly hope to avoid it. But let us have as little of the doctor as possible. Mr. Turnbull, and the cheap press, and the rising spirit of the loudest among the people, made it manifest that something must be conceded. Let us be generous in our concession. That was now the doctrine of many,—perhaps of most of the leading politicians of the day.



Let us be generous. Let us at any rate seem to be generous. Let us give with an open hand,—but still with a hand which, though open, shall not bestow too much. The coach must be allowed to run down the hill. Indeed, unless the coach goes on running no journey will be made. But let us have the drag on both the hind-wheels. And we must remember that coaches running down hill without drags are apt to come to serious misfortune.

But there were men, even in the Cabinet, who had other ideas of public service than that of dragging the wheels of the coach. Mr. Gresham was in earnest. Plantagenet Palliser was in earnest. That exceedingly intelligent young nobleman Lord Cantrip was in earnest. Mr. Mildmay threw, perhaps, as much of earnestness into the matter as was compatible with his age and his full appreciation of the manner in which the present cry for Reform had been aroused. He was thoroughly honest, thoroughly patriotic, and thoroughly ambitious that he should be written of hereafter as one who to the end of a long life had worked sedulously for the welfare of the people;—but he disbelieved in Mr. Turnbull, and in the bottom of his heart indulged an aristocratic contempt for the penny press. And there was no man in England more in earnest, more truly desirous of Reform, than Mr. Monk. It was his great political idea that political advantages should be extended to the people, whether the people clamoured for them or did not clamour for them,—even whether they desired them or did not desire them. “You do not ask a child whether he would like to learn his lesson,” he would say. “At any rate, you do not wait till he cries for his book.” When, therefore, men said to him that there was no earnestness in the cry for Reform, that the cry was a false cry, got up for factional purposes by interested persons, he would reply that the thing to be done should not be done in obedience to any cry, but because it was demanded by justice, and was a debt due to the people.

Our hero in the autumn had written to Mr. Monk on the politics of the moment, and the following had been Mr. Monk's reply:—

“Longroyston, October 12, 186—.

“MY DEAR FINN,

“I am staying here with the Duke and Duchess of St. Bungay. The house is very full, and Mr. Mildmay was here last week; but as I don't shoot, and can't play billiards, and have no taste for charades, I am becoming tired of the gaieties, and shall leave them to-morrow. Of course you know that we are not to have the autumn session. I think that Mr. Mildmay is right. Could we have been sure of passing our measure, it would have been very well; but we could not have been sure, and failure with our bill in a session convened for the express purpose of passing it would have injured the cause greatly. We could hardly have gone on with it again in the spring. Indeed, we must have resigned. And though I may truly say that I would as lief

have a good measure from Lord De Terrier as from Mr. Mildmay, and that I am indifferent to my own present personal position, still I think that we should endeavour to keep our seats as long as we honestly believe ourselves to be more capable of passing a good measure than are our opponents.

"I am astonished by the difference of opinion which exists about Reform,—not only as to the difference in the extent and exact tendency of the measure that is needed,—but that there should be such a divergence of ideas as to the grand thing to be done and the grand reason for doing it. We are all agreed that we want Reform in order that the House of Commons may be returned by a larger proportion of the people than is at present employed upon that work, and that each member when returned should represent a somewhat more equal section of the whole constituencies of the country than our members generally do at present. All then confess that a £50 county franchise must be too high, and that a borough with less than two hundred registered voters must be wrong. But it seems to me that but few among us perceive, or at any rate acknowledge, the real reasons for changing these things and reforming what is wrong without delay. One great authority told us the other day that the sole object of legislation on this subject should be to get together the best possible 658 members of Parliament. That to me would be a most repulsive idea if it were not that by its very vagueness it becomes inoperative. Who shall say what is best; or what characteristic constitutes excellence in a member of Parliament? If the gentleman means excellence in general wisdom, or in statecraft, or in skill in talking, or in private character, or even excellence in patriotism, then I say that he is utterly wrong, and has never touched with his intellect the true theory of representation. One only excellence may be acknowledged, and that is the excellence of likeness. As a portrait should be like the person portrayed, so should a representative House be like the people whom it represents. Nor in arranging a franchise does it seem to me that we have a right to regard any other view. If a country be unfit for representative government,—and it may be that there are still peoples unable to use properly that greatest of all blessings,—the question as to what state policy may be best for them is a different question. But if we do have representation, let the representative assembly be like the people, whatever else may be its virtues,—and whatever else its vices.

"Another great authority has told us that our House of Commons should be the mirror of the people. I say, not its mirror, but its miniature. And let the artist be careful to put in every line of the expression of that ever-moving face. To do this is a great work, and the artist must know his trade well. In America the work has been done with so coarse a hand that nothing is shown in the picture but the broad, plain, unspeaking outline of the face. As you look from the represented to the representation you cannot but acknowledge the

likeness ;—but there is in that portrait more of the body than of the mind. The true portrait should represent more than the body. With us, hitherto, there have been snatches of the countenance of the nation which have been inimitable,—a turn of the eye here and a curl of the lip there, which have seemed to denote a power almost divine. There have been marvels on the canvas so beautiful that one approaches the work of remodelling it with awe. But not only is the picture imperfect,—a thing of snatches,—but with years it becomes less and still less like its original.

“The necessity for remodelling it is imperative, and we shall be cowards if we decline the work. But let us be specially careful to retain as much as possible of those lines which we all acknowledge to be so faithfully representative of our nation. To give to a bare numerical majority of the people that power which the numerical majority has in the United States, would not be to achieve representation. The nation as it now exists would not be known by such a portrait ;—but neither can it now be known by that which exists. It seems to me that they who are averse to change, looking back with an unmeasured respect on what our old Parliaments have done for us, ignore the majestic growth of the English people, and forget the present in their worship of the past. They think that we must be what we were,—at any rate, what we were thirty years since. They have not, perhaps, gone into the houses of artisans, or, if there, they have not looked into the breasts of the men. With population vice has increased, and these politicians, with ears but no eyes, hear of drunkenness and sin and ignorance. And then they declare to themselves that this wicked, half-barbarous, idle people should be controlled and not represented. A wicked, half-barbarous, idle people may be controlled ;—but not a people thoughtful, educated, and industrious. We must look to it that we do not endeavour to carry our control beyond the wickedness and the barbarity, and that we be ready to submit to control from thoughtfulness and industry.

“I hope we shall find you helping at the good work early in the spring.

“Yours, always faithfully,

“JOSHUA MONK.”

Phineas was up in London before the end of January, but did not find there many of those whom he wished to see. Mr. Low was there, and to him he showed Mr. Monk's letter, thinking that it must be convincing even to Mr. Low. This he did in Mrs. Low's drawing-room, knowing that Mrs. Low would also condescend to discuss politics on an occasion. He had dined with them, and they had been glad to see him, and Mrs. Low had been less severe than hitherto against the great sin of her husband's late pupil. She had condescended to congratulate him on becoming member for an English

borough instead of an Irish one, and had asked him questions about Saulsby Castle. But, nevertheless, Mr. Monk's letter was not received with that respectful admiration which Phineas thought that it deserved. Phineas, foolishly, had read it out loud, so that the attack came upon him simultaneously from the husband and from the wife.

"It is just the usual claptrap," said Mr. Low, "only put into language somewhat more grandiloquent than usual."

"Claptrap!" said Phineas.

"It's what I call downright Radical nonsense," said Mrs. Low, nodding her head energetically. "Portrait indeed! Why should we want to have a portrait of ignorance and ugliness. What we all want is to have things quiet and orderly."

"Then you'd better have a paternal government at once," said Phineas.

"Just so," said Mr. Low,—"only that what you call a paternal government is not always quiet and orderly. National order I take to be submission to the law. I should not think it quiet and orderly if I were sent to Cayenne without being brought before a jury."

"But such a man as you would not be sent to Cayenne," said Phineas.

"My next-door neighbour might be,—which would be almost as bad. Let him be sent to Cayenne if he deserves it, but let a jury say that he has deserved it. My idea of government is this,—that we want to be governed by law and not by caprice, and that we must have a legislature to make our laws. If I thought that Parliament as at present established made the laws badly, I would desire a change; but I doubt whether we shall have them better from any change in Parliament which Reform will give us."

"Of course not," said Mrs. Low. "But we shall have a lot of beggars put on horseback, and we all know where they ride to."

Then Phineas became aware that it is not easy to convince any man or any woman on a point of politics,—not even though he who argues may have an eloquent letter from a philosophical Cabinet Minister in his pocket to assist him.

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## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### PHINEAS FINN MAKES PROGRESS.

FEBRUARY was far advanced and the new Reform Bill had already been brought forward, before Lady Laura Kennedy came up to town. Phineas had of course seen Mr. Kennedy and had heard from him tidings of his wife. She was at Saulsby with Lady Baldock and Miss Boreham and Violet Effingham, but was to be in London soon. Mr. Kennedy, as it appeared, did not quite know when he was to expect his wife; and Phineas thought that he could perceive from the

tone of the husband's voice that something was amiss. He could not however ask any questions excepting such as referred to the expected arrival. Was Miss Effingham to come to London with Lady Laura? Mr. Kennedy believed that Miss Effingham would be up before Easter, but he did not know whether she would come with his wife. "Women," he said, "are so fond of mystery that one can never quite know what they intend to do." He corrected himself at once however, perceiving that he had seemed to say something against his wife, and explained that his general accusation against the sex was not intended to apply to Lady Laura. This, however, he did so awkwardly as to strengthen the feeling with Phineas that something assuredly was wrong. "Miss Effingham," said Mr. Kennedy, "never seems to know her own mind." "I suppose she is like other beautiful girls who are petted on all sides," said Phineas. "As for her beauty, I don't think much of it," said Mr. Kennedy; "and as for petting, I do not understand it in reference to grown persons. Children may be petted, and dogs,—though that too is bad; but what you call petting for grown persons is I think frivolous and almost indecent." Phineas could not help thinking of Lord Chiltern's opinion that it would have been wise to have left Mr. Kennedy in the hands of the garrotters.

The debate on the second reading of the bill was to be commenced on the 1st of March, and two days before that Lady Laura arrived in Grosvenor Place. Phineas got a note from her in three words to say that she was at home and would see him if he called on Sunday afternoon. The Sunday to which she alluded was the last day of February. Phineas was now more certain than ever that something was wrong. Had there been nothing wrong between Lady Laura and her husband, she would not have rebelled against him by asking visitors to the house on a Sunday. He had nothing to do with that, however, and of course he did as he was desired. He called on the Sunday and found Mrs. Bonteen sitting with Lady Laura. "I am just in time for the debate," said Lady Laura, when the first greeting was over.

"You don't mean to say that you intend to sit it out," said Mrs. Bonteen.

"Every word of it,—unless I lose my seat. What else is there to be done at present?"

"But the place they give us is so unpleasant," said Mrs. Bonteen.

"There are worse places even than the Ladies' Gallery," said Lady Laura. "And perhaps it is as well to make oneself used to inconveniences of all kinds. You will speak, Mr. Finn?"

"I intend to do so."

"Of course you will. The great speeches will be Mr. Gresham's, Mr. Daubeny's, and Mr. Monk's."

"Mr. Palliser intends to be very strong," said Mrs. Bonteen.

"A man cannot be strong or not as he likes it," said Lady Laura.

"Mr. Palliser I believe to be a most useful man, but he never can become an orator. He is of the same class as Mr. Kennedy,—only of course higher in the class."

"We all look for a great speech from Mr. Kennedy," said Mrs. Bonteen.

"I have not the slightest idea whether he will open his lips," said Lady Laura. Immediately after that Mrs. Bonteen took her leave. "I hate that woman like poison," continued Lady Laura. "She is always playing a game, and it is such a small game that she plays! And she contributes so little to society. She is not witty nor well-informed,—not even sufficiently ignorant or ridiculous to be a laughing-stock. One gets nothing from her, and yet she has made her footing good in the world."

"I thought she was a friend of yours."

"You did not think so! You could not have thought so! How can you bring such an accusation against me, knowing me as you do? But never mind Mrs. Bonteen now. On what day shall you speak?"

"On Tuesday if I can."

"I suppose you can arrange it?"

"I shall endeavour to do so, as far as any arrangement can go."

"We shall carry the second reading," said Lady Laura.

"Yes," said Phineas; "I think we shall; but by the votes of men who are determined so to pull the bill to pieces in committee, that its own parents will not know it. I doubt whether Mr. Mildmay will have the temper to stand it."

"They tell me that Mr. Mildmay will abandon the custody of the bill to Mr. Gresham after his first speech."

"I don't know that Mr. Gresham's temper is more enduring than Mr. Mildmay's," said Phineas.

"Well;—we shall see. My own impression is that nothing would save the country so effectually at the present moment as the removal of Mr. Turnbull to a higher and a better sphere."

"Let us say the House of Lords," said Phineas.

"God forbid!" said Lady Laura.

Phineas sat there for half an hour and then got up to go, having spoken no word on any other subject than that of politics. He longed to ask after Violet. He longed to make some inquiry respecting Lord Chiltern. And, to tell the truth, he felt painfully curious to hear Lady Laura say something about her own self. He could not but remember what had been said between them up over the waterfall, and how he had been warned not to return to Loughlinter. And then again, did Lady Laura know anything of what had passed between him and Violet? "Where is your brother?" he said, as he rose from his chair.

"Oswald is in London. He was here not an hour before you came in."

"Where is he staying?"

"At Mauregy's. He goes down on Tuesday, I think. He is to see his father to-morrow morning."

"By agreement?"

"Yes;—by agreement. There is a new trouble,—about money that they think to be due to me. But I cannot tell you all now. There have been some words between Mr. Kennedy and papa. But I won't talk about it. You would find Oswald at Mauregy's at any hour before eleven to-morrow."

"Did he say anything about me?" asked Phineas.

"We mentioned your name certainly."

"I do not ask from vanity, but I want to know whether he is angry with me."

"Angry with you! Not in the least. I'll tell you just what he said. He said he should not wish to live even with you, but that he would sooner try it with you than with any man he ever knew."

"He had got a letter from me?"

"He did not say so;—but he did not say he had not."

"I will see him to-morrow if I can." And then Phineas prepared to go.

"One word, Mr. Finn," said Lady Laura, hardly looking him in the face and yet making an effort to do so. "I wish you to forget what I said to you at Loughlinter."

"It shall be as though it were forgotten," said Phineas.

"Let it be absolutely forgotten. In such a case a man is bound to do all that a woman asks him, and no man has a truer spirit of chivalry than yourself. That is all. Look in when you can. I will not ask you to dine here as yet, because we are so frightfully dull. Do your best on Tuesday, and then let us see you on Wednesday. Good-bye."

Phineas as he walked across the park towards his club made up his mind that he would forget the scene by the waterfall. He had never quite known what it had meant, and he would wipe it away from his mind altogether. He acknowledged to himself that chivalry did demand of him that he should never allow himself to think of Lady Laura's rash words to him. That she was not happy with her husband was very clear to him;—but that was altogether another affair. She might be unhappy with her husband without indulging any guilty love. He had never thought it possible that she could be happy living with such a husband as Mr. Kennedy. All that, however, was now past remedy, and she must simply endure the mode of life which she had prepared for herself. There were other men and women in London tied together for better and worse, in reference to whose union their friends knew that there would be no better;—that it must be all worse. Lady Laura must bear it, as it was borne by many another married woman.



On the Monday morning Phineas called at Mauregy's Hotel at ten o'clock, but in spite of Lady Laura's assurance to the contrary, he found that Lord Chiltern was out. He had felt some palpitation at the heart as he made his inquiry, knowing well the fiery nature of the man he expected to see. It might be that there would be some actual personal conflict between him and this half-mad lord before he got back again into the street. What Lady Laura had said about her brother did not in the estimation of Phineas make this at all the less probable. The half-mad lord was so singular in his ways that it might well be that he should speak handsomely of a rival behind his back and yet take him by the throat as soon as they were together, face to face. And yet, as Phineas thought, it was necessary that he should see the half-mad lord. He had written a letter to which he had received no reply, and he considered it to be incumbent on him to ask whether it had been received and whether any answer to it was intended to be given. He went therefore to Lord Chiltern at once,—as I have said, with some feeling at his heart that there might be violence, at any rate of words, before he should find himself again in the street. But Lord Chiltern was not there. All that the porter knew was that Lord Chiltern intended to leave the house on the following morning. Then Phineas wrote a note and left it with the porter.

"DEAR CHILTERN,

"I particularly want to see you with reference to a letter I wrote to you last summer. I must be in the House to-day from four till the debate is over. I will be at the Reform Club from two till half-past three, and will come if you will send for me, or I will meet you anywhere at any hour to-morrow morning.

"Yours, always, P. F."

No message came to him at the Reform Club, and he was in his seat in the House by four o'clock. During the debate a note was brought to him which ran as follows:—

"I have got your letter this moment. Of course we must meet. I hunt on Tuesday, and go down by the early train; but I will come to town on Wednesday. We shall require to be private, and I will therefore be at your rooms at one o'clock on that day.—C."

Phineas at once perceived that the note was a hostile note, written in an angry spirit,—written to one whom the writer did not at the moment acknowledge to be his friend. This was certainly the case, whatever Lord Chiltern may have said to his sister as to his friendship for Phineas. Phineas crushed the note into his pocket, and of course determined that he would be in his rooms at the hour named.

The debate was opened by a speech from Mr. Mildmay, in which

that gentleman at great length and with much perspicuity explained his notion of that measure of Parliamentary Reform which he thought to be necessary. He was listened to with the greatest attention to the close,—and perhaps, at the end of his speech, with more attention than usual, as there had gone abroad a rumour that the Prime Minister intended to declare that this would be the last effort of his life in that course. But, if he ever intended to utter such a pledge, his heart misgave him when the time came for uttering it. He merely said that as the management of the bill in committee would be an affair of much labour, and probably spread over many nights, he would be assisted in his work by his colleagues, and especially by his right honourable friend the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. It was then understood that Mr. Gresham would take the lead should the bill go into committee;—but it was understood also that no resignation of leadership had been made by Mr. Mildmay.

The measure now proposed to the House was very much the same as that which had been brought forward in the last session. The existing theory of British representation was not to be changed, but the actual practice was to be brought nearer to the ideal theory. The ideas of manhood suffrage, and of electoral districts, were to be as far ever removed from the bulwarks of the British Constitution. There were to be counties with agricultural constituencies, purposely arranged to be purely agricultural, whenever the nature of the counties would admit of its being so. No artificer at Reform, let him be Conservative or Liberal, can make Middlesex or Lancashire agricultural; but Wiltshire and Suffolk were to be preserved inviolable to the plough,—and the apples of Devonshire were still to have their sway. Every town in the three kingdoms with a certain population was to have two members. But here there was much room for cavil,—as all men knew would be the case. Who shall say what is a town, or where shall be its limits? Bits of counties might be borrowed, so as to lessen the Conservatism of the country without endangering the Liberalism of the borough. And then there were the boroughs with one member,—and then the groups of little boroughs. In the discussion of any such arrangement how easy is the picking of holes, how impossible the fabrication of a garment that shall be impervious to such picking! Then again there was that great question of the ballot. On that there was to be no mistake. Mr. Mildmay again pledged himself to disappear from the Treasury bench should any motion, clause, or resolution be carried by that House in favour of the ballot. He spoke for three hours, and then left the carcass of his bill to be fought for by the opposing armies.

No reader of these pages will desire that the speeches in the debate should be even indicated. It soon became known that the Conservatives would not divide the House against the second reading of the bill. They declared, however, very plainly their intention of so

altering the clauses of the bill in committee,—or at least of attempting so to do,—as to make the bill their bill, rather than the bill of their opponents. To this Mr. Palliser replied that as long as nothing vital was touched the Government would only be too happy to oblige their friends opposite. If anything vital were touched, the Government could only fall back upon their friends on that side. And in this way men were very civil to each other. But Mr. Turnbull, who opened the debate on the Tuesday, thundered out an assurance to gods and men that he would divide the House on the second reading of the bill itself. He did not doubt but that there were many good men and true to go with him into the lobby, but into the lobby he would go if he had no more than a single friend to support him. And he warned the Sovereign, and he warned the House, and he warned the people of England, that the measure of Reform now proposed by a so-called liberal Minister was a measure prepared in concert with the ancient enemies of the people. He was very loud, very angry, and quite successful in hallooing down sundry attempts which were made to interrupt him. "I find," he said, "that there are many members here who do not know me yet,—young members, probably, who are green from the waste lands and road-sides of private life. They will know me soon, and then, may be, there will be less of this foolish noise, less of this elongation of unnecessary necks. Our Rome must be aroused to a sense of its danger by other voices than these." He was called to order, but it was ruled that he had not been out of order,—and he was very triumphant. Mr. Monk answered him, and it was declared afterwards that Mr. Monk's speech was one of the finest pieces of oratory that had ever been uttered in that House. He made one remark personal to Mr. Turnbull. "I quite agreed with the right honourable gentleman in the chair," he said, "when he declared that the honourable member was not out of order just now. We all of us agree with him always on such points. The rules of our House have been laid down with the utmost latitude, so that the course of our debates may not be frivolously or too easily interrupted. But a member may be so in order as to incur the displeasure of the House, and to merit the reproaches of his countrymen." This little duel gave great life to the debate; but it was said that those two great Reformers, Mr. Turnbull and Mr. Monk, could never again meet as friends.

In the course of the debate on Tuesday Phineas got upon his legs. The reader, I trust, will remember that hitherto he had failed altogether as a speaker. On one occasion he had lacked even the spirit to use and deliver an oration which he had prepared. On a second occasion he had broken down,—woefully, and past all redemption, as said those who were not his friends,—unfortunately, but not past redemption, as said those who were his true friends. After that once again he had risen and said a few plain words which had called for no

remark, and had been spoken as though he were in the habit of addressing the House daily. It may be doubted whether there were half-a-dozen men now present who recognised the fact that this man, who was so well known to so many of them, was now about to make another attempt at a first speech. Phineas himself diligently attempted to forget that such was the case. He had prepared for himself a few headings of what he intended to say, and on one or two points had arranged his words. His hope was that even though he should forget the words, he might still be able to cling to the thread of his discourse. When he found himself again upon his legs amidst those crowded seats, for a few moments there came upon him that old sensation of awe. Again things grew dim before his eyes, and again he hardly knew at which end of that long chamber the Speaker was sitting. But there arose within him a sudden courage, as soon as the sound of his own voice in that room had made itself intimate to his ear; and after the few first sentences, all fear, all awe, was gone from him. When he read his speech in the report afterwards, he found that he had strayed very wide of his intended course, but he had strayed without tumbling into ditches, or falling into sunken pits. He had spoken much from Mr. Monk's letter, but had had the grace to acknowledge whence had come his inspiration. He hardly knew, however, whether he had failed again or not, till Barrington Erle came up to him as they were leaving the House, with his old easy pressing manner. "So you have got into form at last," he said. "I always thought that it would come. I never for a moment believed but that it would come sooner or later." Phineas Finn answered not a word; but he went home and lay awake all night triumphant. The verdict of Barrington Erle sufficed to assure him that he had succeeded.

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## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### A ROUGH ENCOUNTER.

PHINEAS, when he woke, had two matters to occupy his mind,—his success of the previous night and his coming interview with Lord Chiltern. He stayed at home the whole morning, knowing that nothing could be done before the hour Lord Chiltern had named for his visit. He read every word of the debate, studiously postponing the perusal of his own speech till he should come to it in due order. And then he wrote to his father, commencing his letter as though his writing had no reference to the affairs of the previous night. But he soon found himself compelled to break into some mention of it. "I send you a Times," he said, "in order that you may see that I have had my finger in the pie. I have hitherto abstained from putting myself forward in the House, partly through a base fear for which I despise myself, and partly through a feeling of prudence that a man

of my age should not be in a hurry to gather laurels. This is literally true. There has been the fear, and there has been the prudence. My wonder is, that I have not incurred more contempt from others because I have been a coward. People have been so kind to me that I must suppose them to have judged me more leniently than I have judged myself." Then, as he was putting up the paper, he looked again at his own speech, and of course read every word of it once more. As he did so it occurred to him that the reporters had been more than courteous to him. The man who had followed him had been, he thought, at any rate as long-winded as himself; but to this orator less than half a column had been granted. To him had been granted ten lines in big type, and after that a whole column and a half. Let Lord Chiltern come and do his worst!

When it wanted but twenty minutes to one, and he was beginning to think in what way he had better answer the half-mad lord, should the lord in his wrath be very mad, there came to him a note by the hand of some messenger. He knew at once that it was from Lady Laura, and opened it in hot haste. It was as follows:—

"DEAR MR. FINN,

"We are all talking about your speech. My father was in the gallery and heard it,—and said that he had to thank me for sending you to Loughton. That made me very happy. Mr. Kennedy declares that you were eloquent, but too short. That coming from him is praise indeed. I have seen Barrington, who takes pride to himself that you are his political child. Violet says that it is the only speech she ever read. I was there, and was delighted. I was sure that it was in you to do it.

"Yours, L. K.

"I suppose we shall see you after the House is up, but I write this as I shall barely have an opportunity of speaking to you then. I shall be in Portman Square, not at home, from six till seven."

The moment in which Phineas refolded this note and put it into his breast coat-pocket was, I think, the happiest of his life. Then, before he had withdrawn his hand from his breast, he remembered that what was now about to take place between him and Lord Chiltern would probably be the means of separating him altogether from Lady Laura and her family. Nay, might it not render it necessary that he should abandon the seat in Parliament which had been conferred upon him by the personal kindness of Lord Brentford? Let that be as it might. One thing was clear to him. He would not abandon Violet Effingham till he should be desired to do so in the plainest language by Violet Effingham herself. Looking at his watch he saw that it was one o'clock, and at that moment Lord Chiltern was announced.

Phineas went forward immediately with his hand out to meet his visitor. "Chiltern," he said, "I am very glad to see you." But Lord Chiltern did not take his hand. Passing on to the table, with his hat still on his head, and with a dark scowl upon his brow, the young lord stood for a few moments perfectly silent. Then he chucked a letter across the table to the spot at which Phineas was standing. Phineas, taking up the letter, perceived that it was that which he, in his great attempt to be honest, had written from the inn at Loughton. "It is my own letter to you," he said.

"Yes; it is your letter to me. I received it oddly enough together with your own note at Mauregy's,—on Monday morning. It has been round the world, I suppose, and reached me only then. You must withdraw it."

"Withdraw it?"

"Yes, sir, withdraw it. As far as I can learn, without asking any question which would have committed myself or the young lady, you have not acted upon it. You have not yet done what you there threaten to do. In that you have been very wise, and there can be no difficulty in your withdrawing the letter."

"I certainly shall not withdraw it, Lord Chiltern."

"Do you remember—what—I once—told you,—about myself and Miss Effingham?" This question he asked very slowly, pausing between the words, and looking full into the face of his rival, towards whom he had gradually come nearer. And his countenance, as he did so, was by no means pleasant. The redness of his complexion had become more ruddy than usual; he still wore his hat as though with studied insolence; his right hand was clenched; and there was that look of angry purpose in his eye which no man likes to see in the eye of an antagonist. Phineas was afraid of no violence, personal to himself; but he was afraid of,—of what I may, perhaps, best call "a row." To be tumbling over the chairs and tables with his late friend and present enemy in Mrs. Bunce's room would be most unpleasant to him. If there were to be blows he, too, must strike;—and he was very averse to strike Lady Laura's brother, Lord Brentford's son, Violet Effingham's friend. If need be, however, he would strike.

"I suppose I remember what you mean," said Phineas. "I think you declared that you would quarrel with any man who might presume to address Miss Effingham. Is it that to which you allude?"

"It is that," said Lord Chiltern.

"I remember what you said very well. If nothing else was to deter me from asking Miss Effingham to be my wife, you will hardly think that that ought to have any weight. The threat had no weight."

"It was not spoken as a threat, sir, and that you know as well as I do. It was said from a friend to a friend,—as I thought then. But it is not the less true. I wonder what you can think of faith and

truth and honesty of purpose when you took advantage of my absence, —you, whom I had told a thousand times that I loved her better than my own soul! You stand before the world as a rising man, and I stand before the world as a man—damned. You have been chosen by my father to sit for our family borough, while I am an outcast from his house. You have Cabinet Ministers for your friends, while I have hardly a decent associate left to me in the world. But I can say of myself that I have never done anything unworthy of a gentleman, while this thing that you are doing is unworthy of the lowest man."

"I have done nothing unworthy," said Phineas. "I wrote to you instantly when I had resolved,—though it was painful to me to have to tell such a secret to any one."

"You wrote! Yes; when I was miles distant; weeks, months away. But I did not come here to ballyrag like an old woman. I got your letter only on Monday, and know nothing of what has occurred. Is Miss Effingham to be—your wife?" Lord Chiltern had now come quite close to Phineas, and Phineas felt that that clenched fist might be in his face in half a moment. Miss Effingham of course was not engaged to him, but it seemed to him that if he were now so to declare, such declaration would appear to have been drawn from him by fear. "I ask you," said Lord Chiltern, "in what position you now stand towards Miss Effingham. If you are not a coward you will tell me."

"Whether I tell you or not, you know that I am not a coward," said Phineas.

"I shall have to try," said Lord Chiltern. "But if you please I will ask you for an answer to my question."

Phineas paused for a moment, thinking what honesty of purpose and a high spirit would, when combined together, demand of him, and together with these requirements he felt that he was bound to join some feeling of duty towards Miss Effingham. Lord Chiltern was standing there, fiery red, with his hand still clenched, and his hat still on, waiting for his answer. "Let me have your question again," said Phineas, "and I will answer it if I find that I can do so without loss of self-respect."

"I ask you in what position you stand towards Miss Effingham. Mind, I do not doubt at all, but I choose to have a reply from yourself."

"You will remember, of course, that I can only answer to the best of my belief."

"Answer to the best of your belief."

"I think she regards me as an intimate friend."

"Had you said as an indifferent acquaintance, you would, I think, have been nearer the mark. But we will let that be. I presume I may understand that you have given up any idea of changing that position?"



"You may understand nothing of the kind, Lord Chiltern."

"Why;—what hope have you?"

"That is another thing. I shall not speak of that;—at any rate not to you."

"Then, sir,—” and now Lord Chiltern advanced another step and raised his hand as though he were about to put it with some form of violence on the person of his rival.

"Stop, Chiltern," said Phineas, stepping back, so that there was some article of furniture between him and his adversary. "I do not choose that there should be a riot here."

"What do you call a riot, sir? I believe that after all you are a poltroon. What I require of you is that you shall meet me. Will you do that?"

"You mean,—to fight?"

"Yes,—to fight; to fight; to fight. For what other purpose do you suppose that I can wish to meet you?" Phineas felt at the moment that the fighting of a duel would be destructive to all his political hopes. Few Englishmen fight duels in these days. They who do so are always reckoned to be fools. And a duel between him and Lord Brentford's son must, as he thought, separate him from Violet, from Lady Laura, from Lord Brentford, and from his borough. But yet how could he refuse? "What have you to think of, sir, when such an offer as that is made to you?" said the fiery-red lord.

"I have to think whether I have courage enough to refuse to make myself an ass."

"You say that you do not wish to have a riot. That is your way to escape what you call—a riot."

"You want to bully me, Chiltern."

"No, sir;—I simply want this, that you should leave me where you found me, and not interfere with that which you have long known I claim as my own."

"But it is not your own."

"Then you can only fight me."

"You had better send some friend to me, and I will name some one, whom he shall meet."

"Of course I will do that if I have your promise to meet me. We can be in Belgium in an hour or two, and back again in a few more hours;—that is, any one of us who may chance to be alive."

"I will select a friend, and will tell him everything, and will then do as he bids me."

"Yes;—some old steady-going buffer. Mr. Kennedy, perhaps."

"It will certainly not be Mr. Kennedy. I shall probably ask Laurence Fitzgibbon to manage for me in such an affair."

"Perhaps you will see him at once then, so that Colepepper may arrange with him this afternoon. And let me assure you, Mr. Finn, that there will be a meeting between us after some fashion, let the

ideas of your friend Mr. Fitzgibbon be what they may." Then Lord Chiltern purposed to go, but turned again as he was going. "And remember this," he said, "my complaint is that you have been false to me,—damnable false; not that you have fallen in love with this young lady or with that." Then the fiery-red lord opened the door for himself and took his departure.

Phineas, as soon as he was alone, walked down to the House, at which there was an early sitting. As he went there was one great question which he had to settle with himself,—Was there any justice in the charge made against him that he had been false to his friend? When he had thought over the matter at Saulsby, after rushing down there that he might throw himself at Violet's feet, he had assured himself that such a letter as that which he resolved to write to Lord Chiltern, would be even chivalrous in its absolute honesty. He would tell his purpose to Lord Chiltern the moment that his purpose was formed;—and would afterwards speak of Lord Chiltern behind his back as one dear friend should speak of another. Had Miss Effingham shown the slightest intention of accepting Lord Chiltern's offer, he would have acknowledged to himself that the circumstances of his position made it impossible that he should, with honour, become his friend's rival. But was he to be barred for ever from getting that which he wanted because Lord Chiltern wanted it also,—knowing, as he did so well, that Lord Chiltern could not get the thing which he wanted? All this had been quite sufficient for him at Saulsby. But now the charge against him that he had been false to his friend rang in his ears and made him unhappy. It certainly was true that Lord Chiltern had not given up his hopes, and that he had spoken probably more openly to Phineas respecting them than he had done to any other human being. If it was true that he had been false, then he must comply with any requisition which Lord Chiltern might make,—short of voluntarily giving up the lady. He must fight if he were asked to do so, even though fighting were his ruin.

When again in the House yesterday's scene came back upon him, and more than one man came to him congratulating him. Mr. Monk took his hand and spoke a word to him. The old Premier nodded to him. Mr. Gresham greeted him; and Plantagenet Palliser openly told him that he had made a good speech. How sweet would all this have been had there not been ever at his heart the remembrance of his terrible difficulty,—the consciousness that he was about to be forced into an absurdity which would put an end to all this sweetness. Why was the world in England so severe against duelling? After all, as he regarded the matter now, a duel might be the best way, nay, the only way, out of a difficulty. If he might only be allowed to go out with Lord Chiltern the whole thing might be arranged. If he were not shot he might carry on his suit with Miss Effingham unfettered by any impediment on that side. And if he were shot, what matter was

that to any one but himself? Why should the world be so thin-skinned,—so foolishly chary of human life?

Laurence Fitzgibbon did not come to the House, and Phineas looked for him at both the clubs which he frequented,—leaving a note at each as he did not find him. He also left a note for him at his lodgings in Duke Street. "I must see you this evening. I shall dine at the Reform Club,—pray come there." After that, Phineas went up to Portman Square, in accordance with the instructions received from Lady Laura.

There he saw Violet Effingham, meeting her for the first time since he had parted from her on the great steps at Saulsby. Of course he spoke to her, and of course she was gracious to him. But her graciousness was only a smile and his speech was only a word. There were many in the room, but not enough to make privacy possible,—as it becomes possible at a crowded evening meeting. Lord Brentford was there, and the Bonteens, and Barrington Erle, and Lady Glencora Palliser, and Lord Cantrip with his young wife. It was manifestly a meeting of Liberals, semi-social and semi-political;—so arranged that ladies might feel that some interest in politics was allowed to them, and perhaps some influence also. Afterwards Mr. Palliser himself came in. Phineas, however, was most struck by finding that Laurence Fitzgibbon was there, and that Mr. Kennedy was not. In regard to Mr. Kennedy, he was quite sure that had such a meeting taken place before Lady Laura's marriage, Mr. Kennedy would have been present. "I must speak to you as we go away," said Phineas, whispering a word into Fitzgibbon's ear. "I have been leaving notes for you all about the town." "Not a duel, I hope," said Fitzgibbon.

How pleasant it was,—that meeting; or would have been had there not been that nightmare on his breast! They all talked as though there were perfect accord between them and perfect confidence. There were there great men,—Cabinet Ministers, and beautiful women,—the wives and daughters of some of England's highest nobles. And Phineas Finn, throwing back, now and again, a thought to Killaloe, found himself among them as one of themselves. How could any Mr. Low say that he was wrong?

On a sofa near to him, so that he could almost touch her foot with his, was sitting Violet Effingham, and as he leaned over from his chair discussing some point in Mr. Mildmay's bill with that most inveterate politician, Lady Glencora, Violet looked into his face and smiled. Oh heavens! If Lord Chiltern and he might only toss up as to which of them should go to Patagonia and remain there for the next ten years, and which should have Violet Effingham for a wife in London!

"Come along, Phineas, if you mean to come," said Laurence Fitzgibbon. Phineas was of course bound to go, though Lady Glencora was still talking Radicalism, and Violet Effingham was still smiling ineffably.





"You ought to have known. Of course she is in town."